WOMEN'S 2010 HOCKEY TEAM UNVEILED, PG22

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VANCOUVER • TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2009 metronews.ca

Celebrity Buzz
Miller, Law getting cosy over holidays? pg 34

World pg 12
U.S. edges toward health care deal

Empire Stadium strikes back

REVIVAL The long-rumoured revival of Empire Stadium will be confirmed this morning.

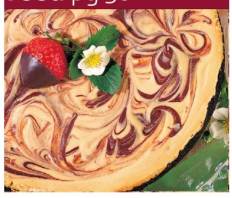
The venue will serve as the temporary home for the B.C. Lions and the Vancouver Whitecaps during yearlong renovations at B.C. Place to replace the stadium's aging roof.

It will sit at Hastings Park, the location of the former Empire Stadium, east of the Pacific National Exhibition grounds.

METRO VANCOUVER

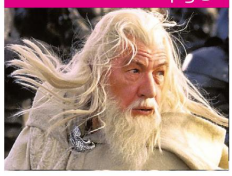
News on the Move
What's this barcode for?
Learn how to scan the barcode with the instructions at the top of pg 3

Food pg 30



Indulge your sweet tooth

Entertainment pg 32



Remarkable decade in film

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Please recycle

Cell ban **New Year's resolution**

KRISTEN THOMPSON/METRO VANCOUVER

Solicitor General Kash Heed in downtown Vancouver yesterday at the launch of a poster campaign reminding Vancouverites that texting and talking on cellphones while driving will be banned on Jan. 1. The posters are being erected along highways and at border crossings. Story, page 3.

Scalping Olympic tix the legal, VANOC way

Marketplace to ensure filled seats, not moneymaker: Organizers

VANCOUVER 2010 Games

JEFF HODSON
jeff.hodson@metronews.ca

VANOC will skim 20 per cent from the sale of all Olympic tickets scalped through an online fan-to-fan marketplace that launched yesterday.

The marketplace, located at vancouver2010.com, allows people to donate or sell tickets if they are no longer able to use them or, in the later case, hope to make a quick buck.

Dave Cobb, VANOC's executive vice-president, said the primary goal of the marketplace is to ensure that every seat is filled.

"We decided, after much debate, to allow a free market on the site," said Caley Denton, VANOC's vice-president of ticketing.

VANOC will take 10 per cent of the sale from each the seller and the buyer. A ticket sold for $1,000 would therefore cost the buyer $1,100 and garner the seller $900.

Denton claimed the 20 per cent fee would act to keep prices low. He also said the fees were on par, or below, similar resale sites.

The organizing committee, he added, does not aim to make a profit through resales and is charging the fee to recoup its costs for establishing the marketplace.

Sellers will not get their money until after the Olympic event is held.

Selling suites

- Organizers also announced yesterday that a number of suites would be available for purchase for each Olympic hockey game at GM Place. In-demand suites will be sold on a lottery basis, the others on a first-come, first-served basis.

A quick search of the site revealed that some fans were already prospecting for Olympic gold.

The most expensive ticket for men's gold medal hockey on sale was $22,400, while the most expensive ticket to the opening ceremonies was $24,600.

The face value on those tickets is $775 and $1,100 respectively.

"We expect to see fairly high prices to start as people test the market," Denton said. "Typically, the most reasonably priced tickets sell right away."

He also warned that tickets sold on sites like Craigslist may not be genuine. "Our message to consumers can be very simple: If someone is selling tickets outside of this website, people need to ask themselves why they would be doing that and is that truly a valid ticket."

The marketplace also includes auctions for rare and unusual Olympic experiences, like sitting in a judge's chair during the figure skating exhibition galas and seats right behind the bench during a hockey game.

Practice travel on Fridays, says VANOC

VANCOUVER 2010 Games

OLYMPICS For the five Fridays leading up to the 2010 Games, Olympic organizers want people to ditch their vehicles and explore different ways of getting around town.

The TravelSmart 2010 Challenge, which begins in the new year, is an opportunity for people to try out different travel options, said Terry Wright, an executive vice-president with VANOC.

"It's an opportunity for us and partners and the public to begin to experiment on how they plan to move in the Games window," Wright said.

Online

- The website travelsmart.ca lists a number of ways people can relieve pressure on the region's transportation network.

VANOC's transportation plan, which includes road closures, lane and parking restrictions, calls for a 30 per cent reduction in vehicle traffic during the Games.

VANOC also wants people to consider shifting their work hours, to avoid commuting between 7 and 9 a.m. and between 2 and 7 p.m.

"We don't expect (the challenge) to mimic Games time, because all of the transit capacity will not yet have come on stream and the road closures won't be there," Wright said.

"More than anything it's about awareness and to get people to start to move in that direction."

VANOC will measure and report the amount of vehicle reduction each week.

TransLink spokesman Ken Hardie said transit ridership during the Games is expected to increase to a million people a day, 250,000 more than current ridership levels.

JEFF HODSON/METRO VANCOUVER

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ScanLife

Local

SeaBus vessel's maiden voyage

The newest member of the SeaBus fleet, the Burrard Pacific Breeze, left, is set to make its maiden crossing between downtown and North Vancouver tomorrow morning. First Rider certificates will be available for all those who take part in the event. METRO VANCOUVER

METRO INTERNATIONAL NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR
2009 Festival of Media Awards

News in brief

ORGANIST VANOC has chosen an American organist, Deiter Ruehle — who plays for the Los Angeles Kings — as the organist for the Olympic hockey games at GM Place. Canucks' organist Mike Kenney was not considered for the position.

ASSAULT Police are asking for witnesses to come forward after a woman was attacked, sexually assaulted and robbed in the 1600 block of Haro Street around 11:30 on Saturday night. David Lolma Wong, 27, was arrested nearby and has been charged in connection with the attack.

MISSING Police resumed their search yesterday for a man reported missing after a hangar went up in flames Saturday at the airport in Prince George. The 53-year-old's car was found inside the remains of the building. The cause of the fire has yet to be determined.

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KRISTEN THOMPSON/METRO VANCOUVER

B.C. Solicitor General Kash Heed speaks at West Georgia and Denman streets yesterday.

Cellphone ban looms

Cops to pull over distracted drivers starting Jan. 1

KRISTEN THOMPSON
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All British Columbians are being forced to adopt the same New Year's resolution come Jan. 1 that, if broken, could cost chatty drivers $167 and three demerit points.

On New Year's Day, police officers will start pulling drivers over for texting or talking on their cellphones, Solicitor General Kash Heed said yesterday at the launch of a poster campaign reminding motorists of the upcoming law.

"Obeying this law is more than about not getting caught," Heed said. "It's about (adopting) new driving habits in British Columbia."

A 30-minute survey conducted by ICBC found 116 motorists texting or talking while driving at Denman and Georgia streets.

Under the new law, drivers will be allowed to use only hands-free cellphones. For new drivers, all cellphones and electronic devices — including hands-free technology — are banned.

"There are many things that distract you, but this is a start," Heed said, as to why items like iPods are still OK. "We can't restrict everything that's going on in the vehicle, but it's incumbent upon us to make this first step."

Vancouver police Const. Jim Chu said for the first month, police will be pulling people over and giving them warnings.

"Whenever rules change, there is a period of adjustment," he said, adding that starting Feb. 1, the law will be strictly enforced.

Increased risk

- Talking on a cellphone while driving increases the risk of crashing by as much as four times.
- Texting while driving increases the risk of crashing by 23 times.

Caregiver charged in shaken baby case

SEAN KOLENKO
for Metro Vancouver

CRIME A 33-year-old family-hired caregiver has been charged with assault after a one-year-old girl was taken to hospital with suspected shaken baby syndrome.

Richmond RCMP released the accused with a promise to appear in court Jan. 28.

The baby girl remains in hospital, but she has been upgraded to stable condition.

"One of these cases is just one too many," said Cpl. Jennifer Pound, a spokesperson for Richmond RCMP. "When you have a situation like this, all you can do is proceed as quickly as possible and get the charges off to the courts, which is what we've done here."

The girl was dropped off at the Strong Start learning centre at Mitchell Elementary School on Dec. 16 by the accused.

The baby appeared fine when she went down for a nap, but when staff and caregivers at the centre were unable to wake her a short time later, she was rushed to hospital.

Doctors at the hospital determined her symptoms were consistent with shaken baby syndrome, a diagnosis that has been confirmed.

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Board scales back plans for RV park during Olympics

SITES Vancouver's Park Board has scaled back plans for RV parking sites at Jericho Beach and Spanish Banks during the 2010 Games because of a lack of demand.

The Jericho Beach site has booked 95 spots — about half of capacity, so only one RV site may be running, news1130.com reports.

The Park Board, which needs to fill 150 spots to break even, says reduced Olympic ticket availability outside of Canada may have had an effect on bookings.

Most of the RV owners are from the Seattle area.

The news may come as comfort to some Point Grey residents, many of whom didn't like the idea of a cavalcade of camper vans making a home out of the neighbourhood for two weeks. METRO VANCOUVER

Exhibition to showcase landscapes of B.C.

An exhibition at the Vancouver Art Gallery will showcase B.C. to Olympic visitors next year through the eyes of the province's renowned artists. Visions of British Columbia: A Landscape Manual will be presented from Jan. 23 to April 18 and will occupy two floors of the gallery. METRO VANCOUVER

Donations on Army's wishlist

SEAN KOLENKO
for Metro Vancouver

With only three days left until Christmas, the Salvation Army is looking for a much-needed surge in donations to keep up with the extraordinarily high demand this holiday season.

"It's unprecedented," said Maj. Brian Venables, a 20-year veteran of the Salvation Army.

"We've never had this many people come to us for our services."

In Vancouver alone, the Salvation Army will serve more than 1,700 Christmas hampers this season, up 200 from last year.

The Army also plans to give out about 400 single-person hampers, twice as many as in 2008.

A Salvation Army Christmas hamper contains some clothing, blankets and food to last a family about four days. Each hamper has a $75 value per person.

"We're also trying to make each hamper culturally specific," added Venables.

"It's been a slow season this year, but today has been a good one so far ... There's always a really good push right at the end. Fingers crossed."
Pat Haram, Salvation Army volunteer

"If a particular culture doesn't celebrate with turkey, we do our best to supply them with items they do celebrate with."

Pat Haram has been volunteering with Sally Ann for four years. Haram's remaining hopeful for a strong finish to the donation drive.

"It's been a slow season this year, but today has been a good one so far," said the 56-year-old retired sales associate from her post at Pacific Centre.

"I've got about $200 and I've only been here an hour. There's always a really good push right at the end. Fingers crossed."

SEAN KOLENKO/FOR METRO VANCOUVER

Tru Smit, 3, donates to the Salvation Army as volunteer Pat Haram watches yesterday morning at Pacific Centre in Vancouver. Tru was at the mall with her dad. Many charities across Canada say donations have been slow this holiday season.

B.C. only province with rising emissions: Stats

ENVIRONMENT British Columbia is the only province that saw an increase in reported greenhouse-gas emissions in 2008, according to figures released by Environment Canada.

The rise — two per cent last year — is blamed on conventional oil and gas extraction, the agency said, but the province's total emissions still rank far below Alberta's.

While B.C.'s heavy industries are responsible for five per cent of Canada's total greenhouse-gas emissions, Alberta is responsible for 42 per cent and Ontario for 26 per cent.

NDP MLA Rob Fleming, said yesterday "the disappointing fact that emissions continue to rise in B.C. alone out of 10 provinces" is unflattering.

"It's embarrassing when the premier received an award for the carbon tax in Copenhagen last week," said Fleming.

George Heyman, executive director of the Sierra Club, said the good that comes from the carbon tax has been dwarfed by the damage done by added oil extraction or the failure to invest in public transportation. "The government is hanging its hat on the success of (contradictory) legislation," said Heyman.

The figures cover emissions reported by industrial facilities like power plants, paper mills and factories. STIG NIELSEN/ FOR METRO VANCOUVER

News in brief

RECYCLING Antifreeze and lead-acid batteries must be recycled under new rules introduced by the province yesterday. The requirements take effect July 2011.

TAX B.C.'s New Democrats are linking elbows with the restaurant industry against the province's pending harmonized sales tax (HST). Restaurants previously enjoyed an exemption under the outgoing provincial sales tax, but will not under the HST. METRO VANCOUVER

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Winter solstice celebrated

Vancouverites celebrated the shortest day of the year yesterday at the 16th annual Winter Solstice Lantern Festival. The event was held at Granville Island and False Creek South, Yaletown and False Creek North, and Chinatown, Strathcona and Commercial Drive. It included bonfires, music, drumming and dancing. METRO VANCOUVER

News in brief

THEFT Vancouverites are being invited to have their skis and snowboards engraved with an identification number, which would help police return them in case of theft.

DRUGS A controversial drug trial will be starting in early January. The purpose is to determine whether medically prescribed heroin is a safe substitute for addicts. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Zagat reviews Vancouver

Just in time for the 2010 Winter Olympic Games, Zagat has released an updated guide to Vancouver with recommendations for restaurants and attractions.

The most popular attractions according to the 2,721 surveyors who participated in ratings for the guide, are Stanley Park; Vancouver Aquarium; Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia; the Capilano Suspension Bridge; and Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden.

Most popular nightlife spots, according to the Zagat surveyors, are the Opus Bar, the Commodore Ballroom, Bacchus Lounge, Celebrities and the Shark Club.

Top food ratings went to La Belle Auberge; Vij's; Cioppino's; Le Crocodile; TojO's; Bishop's; West; and Shiro Japanese.

Best bang for the buck honours went to Nat's NY Pizzeria, Pajo's, Go Fish!, Vera's Burger, Tomahawk Barbecue, Cafe Medina, Saravanaa Bhavan, Nuba Restaurant, Vij's Rangoli and Gyoza King.

The new pocket-sized Zagat guide retails for about $7. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mountie nabbed for drunk driving

ARREST A Vernon RCMP officer has become the third Mountie in as many months to be arrested for impaired driving in B.C.

RCMP said yesterday the off-duty officer was found early Saturday morning behind the wheel of his own parked vehicle, and the arresting officers suspected he was about to drive while impaired.

The Mountie doesn't face any charges at this time but has been reassigned to desk duties while a criminal investigation and an internal review are under way.

Just last month, a Vancouver-based RCMP officer was arrested for drunk driving for the second time in two months, while a Coquitlam officer faced a similar charge in September.

Assistant RCMP Commissioner Al Macintyre says he's deeply disappointed to hear of another case of impaired driving among his officers. THE CANADIAN PRESS

*Sony Ericsson X1, HTC Magic and BlackBerry Bold 9000 (white) available with new activation on any 3-yr. term voice and data plan having min. $45 monthly service fee. Nokia N86 8MP and LG Eve available with new activation on any 3-yr. term voice and data plan. All other devices featured available with new activation on any 3-yr. term voice plan. Early cancellation fees apply.
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Tribunal rules for worker

DISCRIMINATION The B.C. Human Rights Tribunal says an Enderby woman with a serious back injury was discriminated against when she was fired just three days into a new job after spending 16 years out of the workforce.

The tribunal awarded Carolyn Hurn just over $12,000 for lost wages and damage to her dignity and self-respect.

Hurn suffered major spinal injuries in a car crash in 1989 and was unable to work until she was hired in May of 2008 at a Salmon Arm natural health store.

The tribunal says the store owners fired Hurn when they had a change of heart about meeting her needs, calling it discrimination based on a physical disability.

Hurn lived in her car for two months after the firing because she was left penniless, the tribunal said. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Soldier to be tried for murder in court martial

A Canadian officer charged in the death of a wounded Afghan insurgent will face a court martial next month. The military announced yesterday that Capt. Robert Semrau's trial will begin Jan. 25 in Gatineau, Que. Semrau is charged with second-degree murder for the 2008 shooting death. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada

No ethics violation: Watchdog

Conservative Senator Leo Housakos, left, did not break any ethics rules while working within an engineering firm that landed a federal stimulus contract, a Senate watchdog said yesterday. The Canadian Press reported this fall that Housakos was on the payroll of Groupe BPR Inc. last September when it was awarded $4.5 million as part of a consortium studying the aging Champlain Bridge. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Gangs look to cash in on Games

VANCOUVER 2010 **Games**

When Vancouver police officers answered a 911 call this month and stumbled across thousands of ecstasy tablets imprinted with the Olympic rings, they may have also discovered reason to believe the region that saw bullets flying in an all-out gang war earlier this year will see relative calm come Games time.

Just like the province is counting on the Winter Games to inject billions of dollars into the B.C. economy, organized criminals are hoping to cash in.

"I think there is so much money to be made from the Olympics that's it's highly likely that there won't be much disturbance," said Robert Gordon, the director of the School of Criminology at Simon Fraser University.

That certainly wasn't the case last February, when the body count was climbing and petrified Vancouver-region residents were demanding police and politicians act.

The latest round of bloodshed began in January, continuing for months, and at the peak of what police later admitted was an all-out gang war, people "known to police" were dying on a daily basis.

135 The province's Integrated Gang Task Force estimates there are about 135 gangs in B.C. — a group of three or more people committing serious offences.

A frightening picture of murder and revenge was playing out in daily police briefings and before February was done, there had been 16 shootings and nine people were dead, including a 23-year-old mother found slumped over the wheel of a new Cadillac with her four-year-old son still strapped into his car seat in the back.

But the beginning of the end of the violence came in April, as police rounded up members of several prominent gangs.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Pair of cases might re-write libel laws

LEGAL The country's top court is set to rule today on two landmark cases that could re-write the rules on libel in Canada and grant journalists broader protections against lawsuits.

The Supreme Court of Canada has been urged by media outlets across the country to establish a new "responsible journalism" defence that would shield reporters who publish "in the public interest" and follow professional standards in their reporting, even if the truth of their stories cannot be proven.

At the heart of it all is a pair of judgments to be released this morning in two Ontario cases.

One involves reporting by the Toronto Star on a contentious application in northern Ontario by developer Peter Grant, a friend and supporter of former premier Mike Harris, to expand a golf course on cottage lakeside property.

The other involves articles by the Ottawa Citizen about Kanata OPP police officer Danno Cusson, who travelled with his pet dog Ranger to Ground Zero after the 9-11 attacks to look for survivors.

"What's at stake is the modernization of freedom of the press and whether libel laws will be adapted to comply with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms" and how the law has developed elsewhere, Toronto Star lawyer Paul Schabas said.

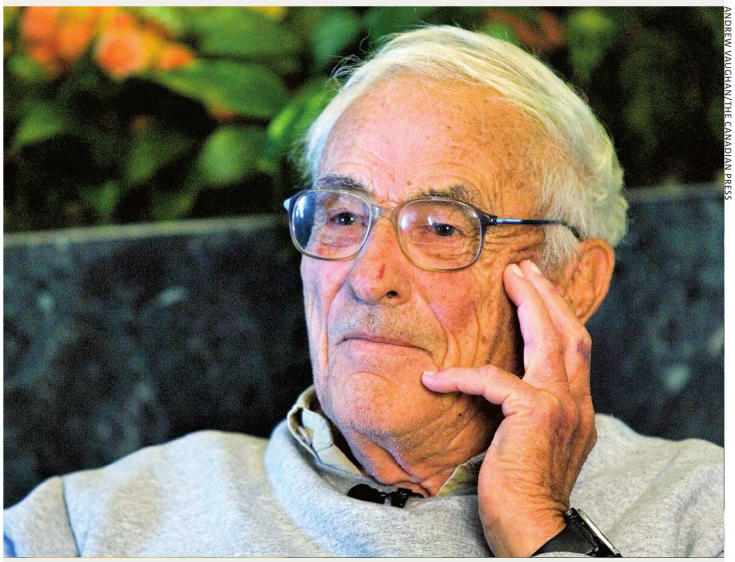
"What's at stake is the modernization of freedom of the press." Paul Schabas, lawyer

"Truth" is always a defence at common law in libel cases. Other defences include whether a published story is a fair and accurate report of "privileged" parliamentary or court proceedings, or stories that are "fair comment."

Grant's lawyer Peter Downard, who declined an interview yesterday, argued before the high court that a new defence would allow reporters to "publish with impunity" articles that are not true.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Science **Canadian's Nobel credentials questioned**



ANDREW VAUGHAN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Willard Boyle, who won the 2009 Nobel Prize in Physics along with George Smith and Charles Kao, conducts an interview on Oct. 6. Former colleagues of the Canadian engineer say the Swedish Academy of Sciences has dropped the ball. Earlier this month, the academy cited Boyle for work that revolutionized digital photography. But two colleagues at Bell Labs say the citation is wrong.

News in brief

AID The Harper government's decision to axe funding for a Christian aid organization has cast a pall over foreign aid groups who fear they'll be cut off and their reputations smeared if they dare to contradict Conservative policy.

ACCIDENT Police and safety officers are investigating the death of a man who fell to the ground while de-icing a plane at Calgary International Airport.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Glucose tests not helping, study claims

DIABETES A new study says Ontario could save tens and even hundreds of millions of dollars by cutting back on the number of unnecessary glucose tests people with Type 2 diabetes perform weekly.

The study suggests the amount the province will have to spend on glucose test strips over the next five years could be cut by between $26 million and $300 million, depending on how often people are told to test their glucose levels. The changes, if implemented, would not apply to people with Type 1 diabetes or people who control Type 2 diabetes with insulin.

Tara Gomes, author of the paper appearing in the Canadian Medical Association Journal, says studies have shown the multiple-times-a-day glucose testing recommended for people with Type 2 diabetes doesn't actually improve their glucose control and can trigger anxiety and depression.

She says cutting the number of tests back to twice a week or something in that range would not increase the risk to the individuals but would save the Ontario government large sums.

The authors say if the policy on testing doesn't change, Ontario will spend $500 million paying for glucose test strips over the next five years.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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SCANLIFE

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CPP teams up to buy Scottish mall
The Canada Pension Plan Investment Board and U.K.-based Hammerson PLC have teamed up to buy a shopping mall in Scotland for about $505 million. THE CANADIAN PRESS

A possible silver lining for H1N1 flu

Outbreak may spur benefits for future vaccines: Experts

When you think of a flu pandemic, the images that come to mind are of people sick and people dying.

But influenza experts quietly admit there may be a silver lining — or several — to the H1N1 pandemic that erupted this year. Not just in the event itself, which was milder than feared, but also in the viral legacy it may leave.

In the wake of this pandemic, flu vaccines could be easier to make or could cover more targets. A tricky problem of drug resistance could disappear. And the toll influenza takes on the elderly could conceivably ease, at least for a while.

Before going too far down the what-if road, however, it's important to note that predicting influenza's path is a mug's game. The longer people study it, the less likely they are to try to guess what influenza viruses may do.

"I don't know — right now everything's a possibility, as far as I'm concerned," Dr. Michael Osterholm, director of the University of Minnesota's Center for Infectious Diseases Research and Policy, cautioned when asked about what the flu landscape might look like in the aftermath of this pandemic.

Still, even experts who share that understanding are thinking about some possibilities.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Optimism

- Their optimism is in large part fuelled by a phenomenon known as viral replacement which has been seen in previous pandemics, or at least the three that have been studied using modern laboratory techniques. In simple terms, during the pandemics of the 20th century — 1918, 1957 and 1968 — the new virus snuffed out its viral predecessor.

News in brief

PR Ottawa is getting antsy about the beating it's taking on sites such as olympicshame2010.com, run by PETA, so its looking for its own social media guru to protect its reputation. Last week, the Department of Foreign Affairs posted a $75,000 contract for a "Social Media Reputation and Online Issues Management" adviser on the seal hunt.

PROTEST The Olympic torch was forced yet again to take a detour, with an Ontario First Nation rerouting its relay amid a protest from a splinter group in the community. The torch still managed to make an appearance on the Six Nations reserve. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quebec won't renegotiate NB Power deal

ENERGY The Quebec government says it has no plans to renegotiate a deal to buy New Brunswick's power utility.

Natural Resources Minister Nathalie Normandeau says renegotiating is not on Quebec's radar screen — because an agreement has already been hammered out.

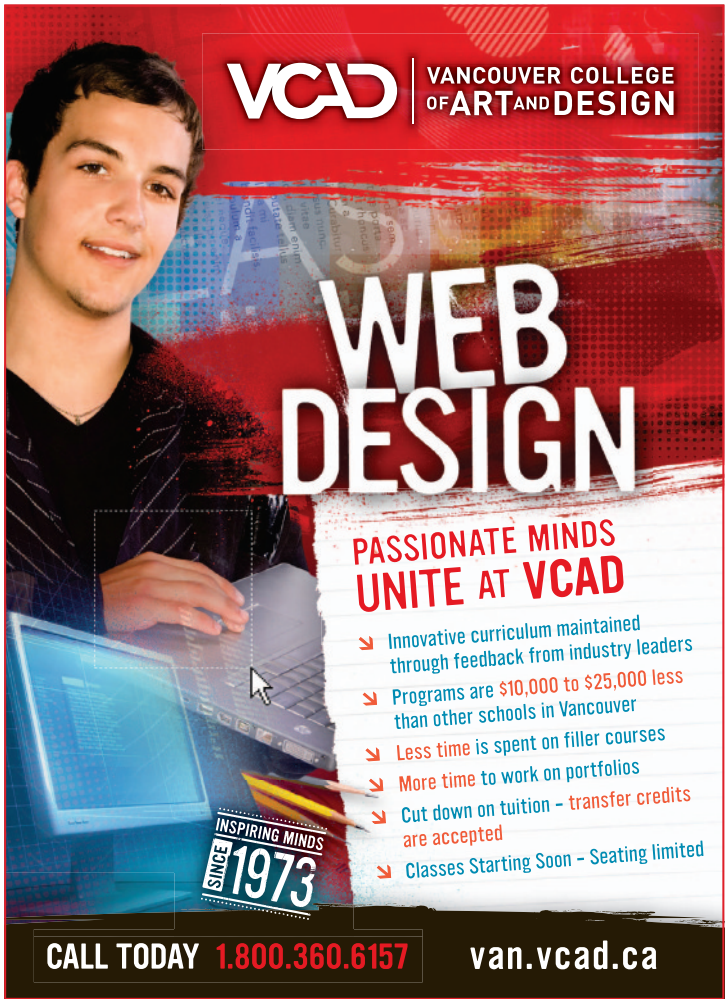
She made the comments yesterday after a cabinet meeting in Quebec City.

Those remarks appear to pour cold water on the suggestion, coming out of New Brunswick, that the deal is somehow still a work in progress.

The New Brunswick government has come under intense political fire over its plan to sell the assets of NB Power for almost $4.8 billion. That government has defended the sale by saying the money will help the province make investments in areas like education that will lead to a more prosperous future for New Brunswick.

But critics have called it a sellout of key assets.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



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Crime down across the board in U.S.

The FBI says the number of murders fell 10 per cent across the United States in the first half of 2009. Overall violent crimes fell by 4.4 per cent, and property crimes also dropped by 6.1 per cent. Car thefts dropped significantly as well, falling nearly 19 per cent and continuing a sharp downward trend in that category. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

World

Olmert pleads not guilty

Former Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert, left, is pleading not guilty to charges of illegally accepting funds from an American supporter and double-billing Jewish groups for trips abroad. The accusations relate to offences allegedly committed during Olmert's time as Jerusalem mayor and cabinet minister, but emerged when he was prime minister. He eventually resigned over the allegations. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Critical hurdle cleared for U.S. health care

U.S. President Barack Obama scored a major victory on his top domestic issue as Senate Democrats narrowly prevailed on a procedural vote yesterday, backing his plan to overhaul America's health care system.

The vote all but ensures that the Senate will approve a bill extending health care to 30-million uninsured Americans before Christmas. But the final outcome remains unpredictable because the Senate measure must be reconciled with a starkly different bill already passed by the House of Representatives.

That is likely the most difficult step in the legislative process.

In yesterday's vote, all 58 Democrats and the Senate's two independents held together against unanimous Republican opposition, providing the exact 60-40 margin needed to shut down Republicans' threat to stall a vote.

Obama later called the vote "a big victory for the American people," adding that it will make a "tremendous difference for families, for seniors, for businesses and for the country as a whole."

The vote came shortly after 1 a.m. with the U.S. capital blanketed in snow. The unusual timing was necessary to permit a final Senate vote by Christmas Eve on Thursday, even if Republicans stretch out the debate as much as the rules allow.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

What's next

- Two more procedural votes await the Senate, each requiring 60 votes, the first of these set for this morning. Final passage of the bill requires a simple majority, and that vote could come as late as Thursday evening or tomorrow if Republicans agree.

UN head defends climate accord

CLIMATE CHANGE United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon yesterday defended the results of the Copenhagen climate change talks as a significant step toward a binding agreement on reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Ban

He made the comments to reporters in response to criticism from world leaders that the process was flawed. Coming up with an accord that member states could agree on was "quite difficult," Ban said, but he said he was encouraged by the results.

"It is not perfect at this time, but it was a very important and very significant step forward," he said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

News in brief

VIRGINIA A former Virginia Tech student accused of decapitating another student at a campus eatery pleaded guilty to murder yesterday as prosecutors described the killer as an obsessed, jilted admirer. Haiyang Zhu had fallen in love with Xin Yang but she rejected him, saying that she had a boyfriend she planned to marry, prosecutors said in revealing a motive for the first time. They described the attack in detail, noting that Yang suffered numerous defensive wounds to her hands and arms as she tried to fend off Zhu. She eventually fell and he severed her head. He was holding it when police arrived.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Israel **One for a thousand**

ODED BALILTY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Noam Schalit, father of captured Israeli soldier Gilad Schalit, stands next to cardboard cutouts of his son in Jerusalem yesterday. Top Israeli ministers debated whether to approve an emotionally charged deal to trade 1,000 Palestinian prisoners for the Israeli soldier held by Gaza militants for more than three years. Scan this barcode for the full article or go to metronews.ca/world.

ScanLife

U.K. politicians agree to TV debates
Britain's three major political parties have agreed to participate in an unprecedented series of television debates. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mexico City OK's same-sex marriage

Mexico City lawmakers yesterday made the city the first in Latin America to legalize same-sex marriage, a change that will give homosexual couples more rights, including allowing them to adopt children.

The bill passed the capital's local assembly 39-20 to the cheers of supporters who yelled: "Yes, we could! Yes, we could!"

Mexico City's left-led assembly has made several decisions unpopular elsewhere in this deeply Roman Catholic country, including legalizing abortion in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy.

Legality

- Seven countries allow gay marriages: Canada, Spain, South Africa, Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands and Belgium. U.S. states that permit same-sex marriage are Iowa, Massachusetts, Vermont, Connecticut and New Hampshire.

That decision sparked a backlash, with the majority of Mexico's other 32 states enacting legislation declaring life begins at conception.

The conservative Nation Action Party of President Felipe Calderon has vowed to challenge the gay marriage law in the courts. However, homosexuality is increasingly accepted in Mexico, with gay couples openly holding hands in parts of the capital and the annual gay pride parade drawing tens of thousands.

The change would allow same-sex couples to adopt children, apply for bank loans together, inherit wealth and be included in the insurance policies of their spouse, rights they were denied under civil unions allowed in the city.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Iran **Paying respects to Montazeri**

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Two pro-reform Iranian women attend the funeral ceremony of Grand Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri, the spiritual father of Iran's reform movement, as they wear green headbands, the symbolic colour of Iranian opposition, in the holy city of Qom yesterday. Montazeri, who died Sunday at the age of 87, was a key figure in the 1979 Islamic Revolution who later accused his fellow clerical leaders of imposing dictatorship in the name of Islam.

Concerns follow Chinese envoy

TAIWAN A senior Chinese envoy's visit to Taiwan for trade talks has sparked a backlash among critics who fear the Taiwanese government's China-friendly policies are opening the door to eventual unification with the mainland.

Chen Yun-lin flew yesterday from Beijing to the central Taiwanese city of Taichung a day after tens of thousands of pro-independence demonstrators marched through its streets to protest President Ma Ying-jeou's push to link the island's economy ever closer to China's.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

News in brief

PRESIDENTIAL SHOT U.S. President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama have received their H1N1 flu shots. Obama said yesterday that he and his wife "just got the shots." A White House official later said Obama was vaccinated at the White House on Sunday and that Mrs. Obama was vaccinated a few days earlier.

KOREAS North Korea threatened South Korean ships with possible attack by designating a firing zone along their disputed sea border yesterday. North Korea designated what it claimed are its territorial waters in the disputed area a "peacetime naval firing zone." That apparently means that artillery shells could land in the waters at any time.

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China to execute British drug smuggler

China will execute a British man convicted of drug smuggling, officials said yesterday, ignoring an appeal from British Prime Minister Gordon Brown. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

world 15

Nazareth excavation **Walking with Jesus**

DAN BALILTY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rev. Jack Karam is seen yesterday at the excavation site of the first dwelling in Nazareth that can be dated back to the time of Jesus. Remains of a wall, a hideout and a cistern were found under an old convent courtyard in the northern Israeli city.

UN blames Guinean chief for slaughter

UN investigators say there is sufficient reason to believe that Guinea's wounded junta leader is directly responsible for the mass killings and rapes of protesters in September, which they consider crimes against humanity, a diplomat said yesterday.

The UN investigators also concluded that there are reasonable grounds to suspect that junta leader Capt. Moussa (Dadis) Camara, along with the army officer who shot Camara in a dispute on Dec. 3 and Guinea's anti-drug chief, bears "individual criminal responsibility" for the events of Sept. 28.

A 60-page report, in French, was transmitted to the UN Security Council, Guinea's government, the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States this weekend.

Its contents were first reported by Le Monde, the French daily newspaper.

The three-member UN commission, which interviewed 700 people to reach its findings, recommended that the International Criminal Court investigate those believed responsible for the killings, the Security Council diplomat said, speaking anonymously.

The report said 156 people died in the incident. The commission also found that at least 109 women or girls were victims of rape and sexual mutilation, while others suffered "cruel and degrading treatment," and dozens of people were arrested or arbitrarily detained in military camps.

The junta has insisted only 57 people died and has denied rapes occurred.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Massacre

- On Sept. 28, soldiers loyal to Guinea's military ruler sealed off the exits of the national football stadium, where tens of thousands of protesters had gathered. Troops entered and fired assault rifles, spraying bullets into the crowd. A UN commission has concluded that 156 people died.

Man says he stuck needles in 2-year-old to spite wife

ABUSE A Brazilian man jailed for piercing his two-year-old stepson with up to 30 needles said he intended to spite his wife by killing the child, who is recovering from surgery.

Roberto Carlos Magalhaes said Sunday that he drugged the boy with wine and had his lover hold him down while piercing him. "I did this two or three times a week during one month," the 30-year-old bricklayer told a TV program by phone from a jail.

The boy was too drunk from the wine mixture to cry while the needles were being pushed in, but he felt pain after the alcohol wore off, Magalhaes said.

"It was truly an unbearable suffering," he said. "It was to get back at the boy's mother. I thought the needles would work their way through his body and kill the boy. It was a way to kill without anyone discovering."

But the pain led the toddler to complain to his mother, and on Dec. 10 she took him to a hospital, where X-rays revealed about 30 needles lodged throughout his body.

The boy is recovering well from a five-hour operation on Friday to remove four rusty needles near his heart and in his lungs. He will soon undergo a third surgery. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pope recalls trip to Holocaust memorial

SAINTHOOD Pope Benedict XVI yesterday recalled a visit to Israel's Holocaust memorial as a disturbing encounter with hatred. The Pope spoke days after angering Jewish groups by moving the Second World War-era pope, Pius XII, a step closer to sainthood. Pius has been criticized for not speaking out during the Holocaust.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

News in brief

REFUGEES Twenty ethnic Uighur asylum-seekers forcibly repatriated from Cambodia to China on the weekend had told a UN agency they feared long jail terms or even the death penalty. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Comment

A leader on the high road

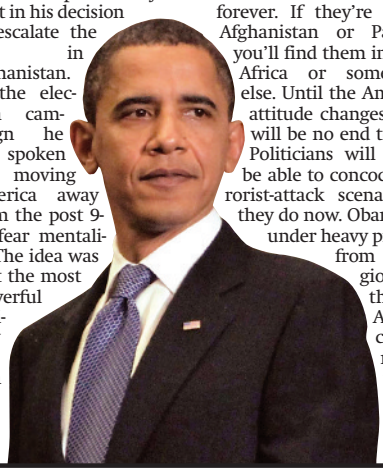
NationalReport
Lawrence Martin
metronews.ca/nationalreport

At long last the United States will get a semblance of a decent health-care system. Barring some unforeseen reversal, U.S. President Barack Obama's reform package will receive final approval next month.

It's far from ideal. There is no public option for example. But it's a major step forward after decades of repeated failed attempts.

This, along with the steadying of the American economy after its near collapse, will mark the most significant achievement of the first year in office for Obama. Many anticipated more from him. Following the years of regressiveness under former U.S. president George W. Bush, his expectations were enormous. But he has shown himself to be more of a middle-of-the-road compromiser than a reformer.

This was particularly evident in his decision to escalate the war in Afghanistan. In the election campaign he had spoken of moving America away from the post 9-11 fear mentality. The idea was that the most powerful military nation in the world would no longer be held hostage to little bands of terrorists hiding away in mountains. Yet though no one has laid a glove on the United States in eight years, the fear of what extremists might do was at the heart of the Afghan escalation.

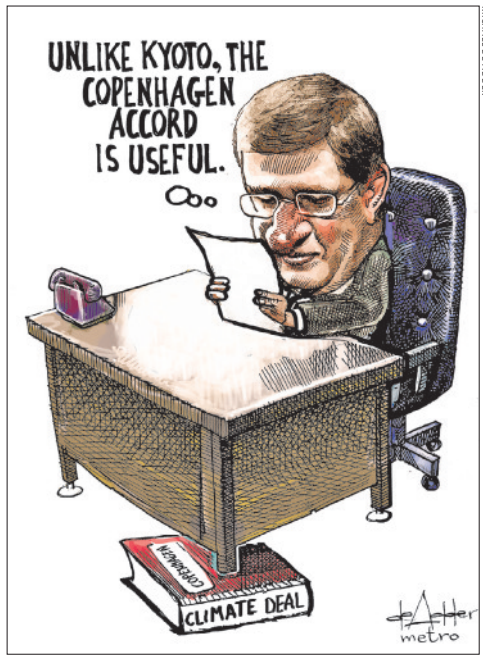


Terrorism will be around forever. If they're not in Afghanistan or Pakistan you'll find them in North Africa or somewhere else. Until the American attitude changes, there will be no end to wars. Politicians will always be able to concoct a terrorist-attack scenario, as they do now. Obama was under heavy pressure from the legions on the American right, now led by hillbilly Sarah Palin, who makes even Bush sound erudite. Had he not opted for more war, they would have pilloried him.

While the results of his first year have been mixed, it is still enormously comforting to have Barack Obama in place as the world's most powerful man. Watching him, you can see a calm and balanced and enlightened mind at work, a president with a global perspective who views the world without prejudice.

What a beautiful contrast this represents as compared to the narrow-minded confrontationalism of his predecessors. Unlike so many other leaders whose smaller minds are steeped in combat-politics, Barack Obama is one who is on the high road and who will stay there.

Lawrence Martin is a journalist and author of 10 books who writes about national affairs from Ottawa.



MICHAEL DE ADDER

Views

Not out of the jobless woods yet

InBusiness
Charles Davies
metronews.ca/inbusiness

So much for the jobless recovery. After scores of worrisome stories grousing that part-time jobs far too often replace full-time positions, and that an economic turnaround would fail to dent unemployment, Statistics Canada had some good news. It reported that 79,000 jobs were added in the month of November, almost half of which were full-time positions. Even the ravaged Ontario economy managed to add 27,000 jobs, the province's best monthly gain since September of 2008. Canada is hardly out of the woods — we're still 321,000 jobs shy of employment levels before the onset of recession — but the job picture is brightening the way it always does when the cycle turns up. Employers actually hire more people.

Then again, look at what they're being hired to do. The long-term trend in this respect is healthy, or not, depending on your point of view. More than 92 per cent of the jobs added in November were in the service sector. Roughly 78 per cent of the 16.9 million people now employed in Canada perform services rather than producing goods, up from 75 per cent five years ago. The major service categories in descending order of importance: Wholesale and retail trade; health care and social assistance; educational services; professional, scientific and technical services; and financial services. In the past year, the service sector has added 38,000 jobs. And over the past five years, the total number of service sector jobs has grown by nearly nine per cent.

We're still 321, 000 jobs shy of employment levels before the onset of recession.

The goods producing sector is a different story. If the Pythons were mocking Canada today, they'd be singing about lingerie salesmen instead of lumberjacks. In all, there are nearly eight per cent fewer goods producing jobs than there were five years ago. More than 295,000 goods producing jobs were lost in the year ended in November, with more than half of the cuts coming in manufacturing. Major job losses have also been felt in construction and natural resources, in the latter instance most recently in Timmins, Ont.

There are several reasons for our inexorable drift to a service economy, including globalization (the Chinese and others just make things more cheaply than we can), shifting commodity prices, and the general economic cycle. And at least we can console ourselves with the fact that it will be a private-sector-dominated service economy. The private sector, including company employees and the self-employed, accounts for about 80 per cent of total employment in Canada, only marginally less than it did five years ago.

Charles Davies is a veteran business writer who has worked for Canadian and international news organizations.

Worth mentioning

Dutch authorities seek to unravel mystery of young sailor's voyage

Her dream of becoming the youngest person to sail solo around the world shattered and under scrutiny over her quest, Dutch teenager Laura Dekker ran away from home — to the Caribbean 5,000 miles away.

Two days after she was reported missing, police managed to track the 14-year-old girl down on the island of St. Maarten.

Laura Dekker

Police and child care authorities were working Monday to uncover how exactly Laura got there and why she fled, as a family spokeswoman speculated the pressure of a court battle over the attempt had gotten to her.

It remained unclear if she had any plans to use the island, half of which is part of the Netherlands Antilles, as a start point for a sailing voyage.

She made international headlines in August when a court temporarily blocked her bid to set sail alone around the world in her eight-metre yacht Guppy.

If Laura were to get permission to set off on the voyage and successfully complete it, she would break a record set this year by 17-year-old Mike Perham of Britain, who sailed 45,000 kilometres around the world in nine months.

A 16-year-old Australian girl, Jessica Watson, is currently trying to beat Perham's record.

Utrecht District Court ruled in October Laura was too inexperienced for the marathon voyage. Judges sent her home to live with her divorced father and appointed a temporary guardian to ensure she did not set off on the voyage. They urged her to make better preparations and said they would reconsider her case in July.

In recent weeks she had been feeling drained by the pressure, said family spokeswoman Mariska Woertman.

Laura was expected to arrive back in the Netherlands on a flight early today police spokesman Bernhard Jens said. Police will then ask her how she managed to slip out of the country last week and whether anybody helped her.

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GM picks Microsoft CFO to run finances

General Motors Co. has hired an outsider to run its troubled finance operations, bringing in the chief financial officer of Microsoft Corp. Chris Liddell will join GM next year, GM CEO Ed Whitacre Jr. said in a statement yesterday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Business

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EDITOR: FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

Retail sales see growth in October

REBOUND Retail sales have returned to the levels last seen a year ago, when the recession began to bite, Statistics Canada reported yesterday.

Sales rose 0.8 per cent in October from the previous month to $35.3 billion, the eighth gain in 10 months.

The auto sector, especially new cars, led the rebound.

Excluding this sector, sales actually edged down 0.2 per cent in October. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Shock jock Stern threatens

KATHY KMONICEK/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

In this Dec. 18 file photo, radio host Howard Stern, left, and his wife, Beth Ostrosky, talk while attending an NBA basketball game between the New York Knicks and Los Angeles Clippers in New York. Stern is threatening to leave Sirius XM Radio Inc. now that the shock jock and the satellite radio provider are getting set to enter contract talks in 2010.

Caution on housing urged

Hints by Finance Minister Jim Flaherty that Ottawa may tighten mortgage eligibility rules to avert a possible housing bubble sent ripples through the industry yesterday, with analysts urging a cautious approach to avoid damaging the economy.

"The main risk here is overshooting, over-responding and basically shutting down or slowing down significantly the housing market," CIBC senior economist Benjamin Tal said in an interview.

"That is a risk they have to take into account, because the housing market is a major, major contributor to overall economic growth and we are still in a very fragile state of the recovery."

Tal was reacting to a taped interview with CTV to be broadcast next weekend in which Flaherty said the government is worried Canadians may be taking on too much debt because of historically low interest rates and could get into trouble when rates inevitably rise to historical levels. THE CANADIAN PRESS

m.metronews.ca

Banks are being criticized for not lending, even after some have received hefty bailouts. However, some say trading, not lending, is the better economic fix for now. Scan this barcode for the full story or go to metronews.ca/business.

Business in brief

WTO The World Trade Organization's top arbitrators upheld a ruling that China is illegally restricting imports of U.S. music, films and books, and Washington pushed forward with a new case accusing China of manipulating the prices for key ingredients in steel and aluminum production. Yesterday's verdict by the WTO's appellate body knocked down China's objections to an August decision that came down decisively against Beijing's policy of forcing American media producers to route their business through state-owned companies.

ELECTRONICS Panasonic Corp. said yesterday that it had taken majority control of Sanyo Electric Co., officially forming one of the world's largest electronics makers. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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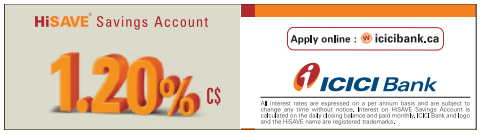
Your Money

EDITOR: FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA



Limit your holiday spending to cash

MoneyMatters

Q I plan to use my credit card to get me through this holiday season. Will the new credit card legislation reduce my interest rate or my ability to apply for more cards?

— Sondeep

A In May, Finance Minister Jim Flaherty proposed sweeping changes for credit card issuers. However, there are no provisions to force issuers to reduce the interest rate charged, but payment allocation on balances can be in your favour. You can apply to as many issuers as you deem appropriate, but that is not recommended, as it can work against your rating. Individuals should have no more than one or two cards. Just keep in mind that the more cards you have, the more you owe.

Using credit to finance your holiday season is not a good idea. Many Canadians fall into debt in December and carry balances on their credit cards that haunt them past Canada Day celebrations. For the holiday season, limit your spending to the cash in the bank.

Some of the changes Flaherty will introduce:

- Minimum 21-day interest-free period on all new purchases
- Statements must give clear indication of how long it will take to pay off balances, if monthly minimum payments made
- Issuers cannot increase credit limits without expressed consent by cardholder
- Payments must be allocated in manner that is advantageous to cardholder
- Limit debt collection practices

The vicious cycle of borrowing to get out of debt, never works.

Henry Choo Chong, CGA, can be reached at choochonghcga@yahoo.ca.

Keep holiday receipts

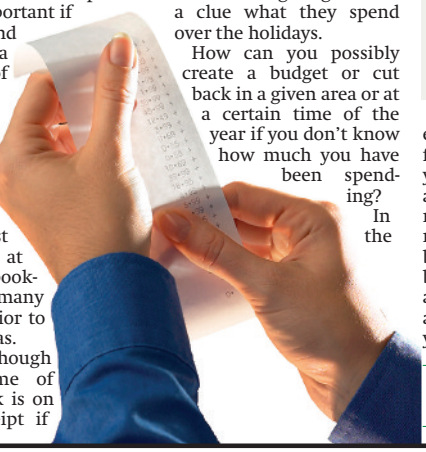
AlisonOnMoney

The whole paperless society chatter never took into account the blizzard that hits at this time of year. Wallets, purses and pockets overflow with receipts. Many frazzled shoppers cram them into drawers or inadvertently toss them in the recycling bin.

But come Dec. 26 when they realize how many returns need to be made, they'll rue not spending a bit of time keeping their holiday receipts in order.

My system is ridiculously easy. I have one file marked Christmas gift receipts and another marked Christmas Purchases Miscellaneous. After I return from a shopping trip, whether for gifts, food or decorations, I pull out every receipt and put it into one of the two files.

For gifts, write the name of the person and the items on the receipts. Tiffany's diamond ring, Dad's pajamas, Aunt Flo's candle, etc. This is particularly important if you tend to buy a lot of presents in a single category. Books are always on my list and I'm at the bookstores many times prior to Christmas. Even though the name of the book is on the receipt if you buy 10 to 15 books, my average every year, it's easy to forget who got each one.



There's another purpose in this two-file approach to holiday receipts. I'm always curious — aren't you? — about how much I spend every year. Ninety per cent of the folks I work with on budgeting haven't a clue what they spend over the holidays.

How can you possibly create a budget or cut back in a given area or at a certain time of the year if you don't know how much you have been spending? In the early part of January, before the holiday bills hit your mailbox, take an hour and add up your gift and non-gift purchases. You may pat yourself on the back for thrift but if you broke the bank you'll have a better idea about how and where to trim next year.

Alison's Money Rule:

- During the last days of Christmas shopping panic, your new best friend is a file marked Holiday Receipts.

Alison Griffiths is a financial journalist, author and host of Maxed Out on the W Network. Write to her at alison@alisongriffiths.ca.

Financial planning for same-sex couples is different, advisers warn

Major inroads have been made into broadening the rights of same-sex couples in Canada, but when it comes to financial planning advisers say important differences remain.

Often it comes down to how same-sex couples manage their long-term financial goals and whether they have really addressed what would happen if one partner was to die without the proper estate documents in place.

Catherine Watson, an estate planning lawyer in Halifax, said Canadian couples typically review their finances around the time they tie the knot. Those triggers are relatively new in same-sex relationships, since the Canadian government only passed the Civil Marriage Act in 2005.

GETTY IMAGES FILE PHOTO

Many same-sex couples don't like to discuss their personal lives with financial advisers or they omit crucial details.

Watson said many same-sex couples choose to stay in long-term relationships, but not marry their partner, which often means that in-depth financial conversations are set aside.

"It's very important to have your documentation in place," Watson said. "As soon as you decide that person is the one you care about, and you want to make sure they're protected... that's when you do it."

Watson said one of the biggest misconceptions same-sex couples make is assuming that common law relationships fall in line with marriages in every legal respect.

From a tax perspective, the government treats benefits the same for marriages and common law relationships, but will and estate planning is an entirely different thing.

And some provinces treat common-law relationships differently, such as in Nova Scotia, where the relationship won't be recognized if the partner who dies never established a will or power of attorney.

Watson said unless the common-law couple lists their partners as beneficiaries, the government will defer the estate to a blood relative. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Holmgren joins Browns

Mike Holmgren has decided to see if he can fix the Cleveland Browns. The Super Bowl-winning coach accepted a job to become the club's president yesterday, joining a franchise needing a major makeover after a decade of losing. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sports

Messi honoured as world's best

Lionel Messi won the FIFA World Player of the Year award yesterday for leading Barcelona to an unprecedented treble of Spanish and European titles. The 22-year-old Argentine beat 2008 winner Cristiano Ronaldo, 2007 winner Kaka, and his Barcelona teammates Xavi Hernandez and Andres Iniesta in voting among national team captains and coaches. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

EDITOR: DON.MCHOULL@METRONEWS.CA

Defence key for Canada

The key component of Canada's Olympic women's hockey team is fast, skilled defenders who can contribute offensively.

The 21-player roster unveiled yesterday includes three young defencemen with considerable offensive upside.

Edmonton's Meaghan Mikkelson, Montreal's Catherine Ward and Tessa Bonhomme of Sudbury, Ont., are among seven players who will make their Olympic debuts Feb. 13, when Canada opens its defence of the gold medal against Slovakia.

Head coach Melody Davidson, who was also behind the bench at the 2006 Olympics in Turin, Italy, has been cultivating defencemen who can both protect Canada's end of the ice and generate goals.

VANCOUVER 2010 Games

"Over the last four years, we've been building depth at defence," Davidson said.

The roster includes familiar faces such as Hayley Wickenheiser of Shaunavon, Sask., Winnipeg's Jennifer Botterill, Jayna Hefford of Kingston, Ont., and Becky Kellar of Hagersville, Ont., who will all play in their fourth Olympic Games.

Calgary's Carla MacLeod, named the most valuable player at the world championships earlier this year, is one of the best offensive defenders in the game.

Davidson retained her, Colleen Sostorics of Kennedy, Sask., and Kellar as defencemen from the 2006 squad. Kellar and Sostorics play a more defensive-style of game.

"I look at our defence and I think we've got a balance of offensive, mobile defence and the stay-at-home, solid defensive defencemen when you look at Sostorics or Kellar," said Wickenheiser, who was also named captain yesterday.

Canada will play the U.S. in exhibition games Dec. 30 in St. Paul, Minn., and Jan. 1 in Ottawa.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

JEFF MCINTOSH/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Captain Hayley Wickenheiser, right, from Shaunavon, Sask., co-captain Jayna Hefford, centre, from Kingston, Ont., and co-captain Caroline Ouellette from Montreal pose for a photo after the Canadian women's hockey team for the 2010 Olympics was announced in Calgary yesterday.

Sports in brief

CFL Recently fired Winnipeg Blue Bombers head coach Mike Kelly will remain in legal limbo until the new year. Kelly was supposed to appear in a Pennsylvania court tomorrow on domestic assault charges, but his lawyer can't attend and has asked for a new date that will likely be in January.

BASEBALL Free-agent pitcher Jason Marquis and the Washington Nationals have agreed to a two-year contract, pending a physical, two people familiar with the deal told The Associated Press yesterday. One person said the agreement is worth about $15 million US.

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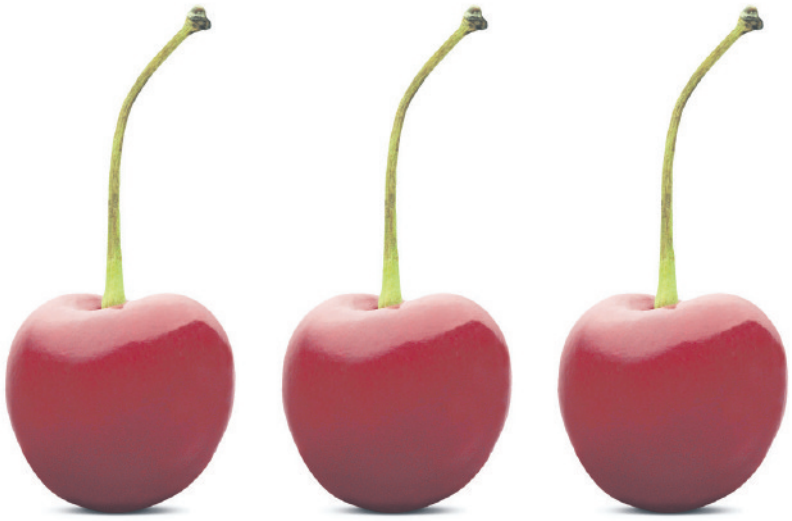

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Sen to wed country star

Senators centre Mike Fisher has agreed to a new long-term deal, but it has nothing to do with hockey.

Fisher has confirmed reports that he and country music superstar Carrie Underwood are engaged.

"Yeah, it's true," told reporters after the team's practice yesterday morning. "We're both obviously excited and very happy."

No date for the wedding has been set. The hockey heartthrob, who's one of the team's most popular players, began dating the former American Idol winner over a year ago after being introduced through a mutual friend.

Rumours of the engagement began swirling on Twitter pages and websites Sunday when a family friend of Underwood, a 26-year-old Nashville resident, tweeted a congratulations to the couple.

Fisher, a 29-year-old from Peterborough, Ont., faced a large media scrum after the players skated ahead of their game against the Boston Bruins last night.

"I think you guys knew before I did," teammate and friend Chris Neil told reporters. "It came out on Twitter about 20 minutes after (Fisher's proposal)."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Carrie Underwood displays her ring last night.

British rugby star finds support after coming out of the closet

Even in this age of enlightenment, a professional athlete considering exiting the homosexuality closet must first exorcise demons.

For hulking British rugby star Gareth Thomas, outing himself last week came only after the disintegration of his marriage, thoughts of suicide and an emotional breakdown.

Gareth Thomas

Calling his former secret "a tight knot in my stomach, always threatening to seep out," he told Britian's Daily Mail, "I was like a ticking bomb. I thought I could suppress it, keep it locked away in some dark corner of myself, but I couldn't."

Thomas, billed as the first top British sports figure to declare he is gay, has become the subject of intense media scrutiny following a candid and heartfelt description of his life as a homosexual in one of the world's most macho sports.

The 35-year-old Thomas is a legend in Welsh rugby, the most capped Wales player with 100 appearances.

He says he agreed to his high-profile public outing in order to push the sporting world in the footsteps of other professions where openly gay people are accepted.

The reaction he's received from family and teammates has been "amazing," he said.

He finally broke down in tears after a Wales game in Cardiff and confessed his secret to a coach, who rallied a few of his teammates to his side.

Their reaction surprised him. "They came in, patted me on the back and said: 'We don't care. Why didn't you tell us before?'"

Thomas insists he will not make his coming out "a crusade," but he hopes the message is clear.

"I feel I have achieved everything I could ever possibly have hoped to achieve out of rugby, and I did it being gay," he said. "I want to send a positive message to other gay people that they can do it, too."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

SCOREBOARD

NHL

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS
Montreal 4 Atlanta 3 (OT)
Boston 2 Ottawa 0
Buffalo 3 Toronto 2 (OT)
St. Louis 7 Edmonton 2
Colorado 4 Minnesota 3
Florida 4 Philadelphia 1
New Jersey 4 Pittsburgh 0
N.Y. Rangers 3 Carolina 1
Phoenix 5 Columbus 2
San Jose 4 Dallas 2
Tampa Bay 4 N.Y. Islanders 2

NBA

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS
Cleveland 109 Phoenix 91
Milwaukee 84 Indiana 81
Orlando 104 Utah 99
Sacramento 102 Chicago 98
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Children diagnosed with autism

About one in 110 children in the United States have autism, according to the U.S. government's latest estimate released Friday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Autism is diagnosed by making judgments about a child's behaviour; there are no blood or biologic tests. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Health & Beauty

EDITOR: JENNIFER.PRITTIE@METRONEWS.CA

Happy couples, happy holidays

Surviving the holidays fight-free can be a challenging but doable

Certain key words can help you and your partner resolve problems

The holiday season can often feel like you're one mulled wine away from losing it. This is the time of year when it's especially important to know when to pick your battles with your mate. And even more important is knowing how to best duke it out.

First of all: No actual duking. Second, according to a new study out of the University of Texas at Austin couple fights are best diffused through the careful use of "analytical" key words. Words like "think," "understand," "because" and "reason."

By "careful," I'm pretty sure they don't mean telling your sweet, honey, darling, binkie-poo that you "think" that that reason he never "understands" anything you tell him is "because" he has no sense of "reason" and must have been dropped on his head when he was a child.

That isn't going to diffuse anything. In fact, you're more likely to achieve the opposite and spark an atomic-level explosion.

Using insults and condescending language rarely wins an argument.

Neither does badgering your partner into talking. You know what I mean: "What's wrong?" "Nothing." "C'mon, what's wrong?" "Just forget it." "C'mon, talk to me." "I don't want to talk about it." "Fine." Silence. Of course, that's when you really kick in. "I have ways of making you talk," you glare.

Needing to always be right is another useless tactic. If you're one of these, ask yourself what's really more important: being right or being happy and getting along with each other?

Also popular and less than productive is the old sweeping blame game. If any phrases that begin with "you always," "you never," or "why are you such an utter and complete dumbass" are about to come out of your mouth, bite your tongue and count to ten. Then try rephrasing your comments in ways that express how you feel rather than what what's wrong with your partner. "I'm feeling frustrated…," "I'm trying to understand…," you get the picture.

"More often than not, stress, exhaustion, or too much Bailey's-laced coffee turns up as the underlying culprit."

Josie Vogels

Of course, despite your best efforts, sometimes a fight escalates before you both even know what hit you and you suddenly find yourselves overwhelmed by if-you-say-another-word-my-head-is-going-to-explode frustration. If this happens, the best and only solution is to walk away, calmly, (that means no running after him out the door in your underwear) and regroup. You can both cool off and deal with whatever was there in the first place — if it really was anything — later. More often than not, stress, exhaustion, or too much Bailey's-laced coffee turns up as the underlying culprit.

Happy Holidays. Hope you survive!

Josey Vogels is a sex and relationship columnist and author of five books on the subjects. For more info, visit joseyvogels.com.

Which product goes on first, reducing skincare confusion

JANINE FALCON
for Metro News

SKINCARE Our appetite for anti-aging solutions feeds a constant release of new technology, ingredients and formulations. As a result, skin care regimens have become more complicated than wash-dry-moisturize. Now we have AHAs, retinol, SPF, vitamin treatments, topical lighteners, concentrated serums and more. "I find that women have trouble figuring out the order of products," comments dermatologist Dr. Paul Cohen, who appears regularly on Canada AM.

NeoStrata Smoothing Cream Level 1 with four per cent glycolic acid, $36.

NeoStrata Vitamin C Concentrate with 10 per cent L-Ascorbic Acid to brighten skin, $36.

A new Applications Tips feature on NeoStrata.ca can help reduce application confusion whether or not the site visitor uses a full regimen of products. NeoStrata, a Montreal-based Canadian company, specializes in anti-aging and anti-acne care in formulations ranging from cleansers to at-home dermatological treatments.

Executive Vice President Lucy Papas says their staff prompted the initiative. "Every time we'd launch something new, there'd be someone eager to use it who would ask, 'Now, do I put on my Vitamin C first, or my retinol first?' We realized that if we in the industry have these concerns and questions, surely there must be more people out there who do," she explains.

NeoStrata's tips outline the application order of specific types of day and night formulas. Each step also provides a 'why' that can be applied to skincare in general. For example, a note linked to the Vitamins & Serums step explains that applying them before moisturizer allows skin to absorb them better, and that "moisturizer creates a barrier which keeps your skin hydrated and locks in the benefit of the vitamins." That's information even non-NeoStrata users can appreciate.

Anna Wintour has vowed to use curvier models in Vogue
The legendary magazine editor has promised to include larger beauties in upcoming issues of the U.S. fashion bible after the success of their January 2010 cover shot image of 25-year-old model Lara Stone. FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK

Surviving stressful situations

CELIA MILNE
for Metro News

Ahh, the holidays. And family. And patterns of behaviour that never change. Your mother makes you feel fat. Or skinny. You always fight with your brother. Your sister bugs you about driving a nice car. How can you survive holiday conflicts and come out feeling good about yourself?

Take time out for yourself and to unwind over the holidays.

While you are running around getting ready for the holidays, spend a little time thinking about the mental traps you fall into, and what you can do differently. Plan ahead your response to comments you find toxic.

"We have to work to predict what will be difficult for us based on our history with the family, and make a plan," says Merryl Bear, director of the National Eating Disorder Information Centre (NEDIC) in Toronto.

NEDIC staff posted a helpful document on their website called "Coping with the holidays." It's written for people with eating disorders, but many of the tips are applicable to anyone who feels vulnerable at this time of year.

"Family get togethers are difficult for many of us, regardless of whether we have a psychological illness or not," says Bear. "Always think in the holiday season, people are not going to change."

It's easy during family events to put the needs of others ahead of your own. Here are some tips to rejuvenate:

• Plan which events you will attend and which you won't. It's OK to say no.

• Plan to have restorative time for your own needs: Go to a movie, turn off the phone, or take a walk.

• Visit or call a trusted friend. You can even let this person know ahead of time that you may need to do this.

• Buy yourself a present.

• Plan to do volunteer work or join an interest or support group if you are likely to feel lonely, empty or depressed. Build some structure into your holidays.

If the holidays are difficult for you, it's important to spend a little time thinking about which people make you feel uncomfortable and what to do about it. Do you want to avoid these people altogether? Predict what these people might say to you. Plan your response, and even practice saying it.

NEDIC recommends saying positive things to yourself. Before events, think "I am entitled to …" During events, "I can handle this." After events, "I did very well."

For instance, you might say to yourself after an event, "I can see that my sister is upset, but it was important that I take care of myself." Remind yourself that you are a worthy individual and are entitled to respectful behaviour.

A new wave of hand cleansers

JANINE FALCON
for Metro News

ANTI-BACTERIAL Seems like the latest don't-leave-home-without-it is a hand sanitizer. And yes, it's got a lot to do with fear of contracting the H1N1 virus, which, according to James Scott, a microbiologist and associate professor at the University of Toronto Dalla Lana School of Public Health, "unlike most other influenza viruses, likely has some amount of contact transmission."

According to the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), as long as the formula is at least 60 per cent ethanol (also called ethyl alcohol), your hand sanitizer can be an effective back-up in battling germ nasties.

"Soap and water is best because it washes away the material that holds the virus," Canada's Chief Public Health Officer Dr. David Butler Jones told Metro at a recent press conference. But he agrees that when soap and water isn't available, sanitizers can help.

But you don't have to settle for stuff that smells all-alcohol all the time.

Bath & Body Works offers 60 per cent ethanol anti-bacterial gel cleansers in scents such as Sea Island Cotton and Warm Vanilla Sugar ($2). Shoppers Drug Mart's Life Brand ($1.49) and One Step ($6.99.) both offer 62 per cent ethyl alcohol sanitizers in an array of light fruity fragrances. (One Step also has an extra-strength formula with a 70 per cent alcohol content.)

If you're thinking biodegradable, Fruits & Passion's Waterless Soap ($14.95) is 67.5 per cent plant-derived alcohol, and a company called EO ($8) offers sanitizers that are 62 per cent certified-organic ethanol and contain organic essential oils as well as organic jojoba oil to keep hands soft.

CLEANSING TIPS

• Make sure hands are free of visible dirt.

• Use enough to wet both hands thoroughly, directs the Public Health Agency of Canada. Rub into palms, backs of hands, between fingers and under fingernails.

• In general, to reduce your risk of getting sick, "keep hands away from eyes, nose and mouth," Butler Jones told Metro.

• Don't worry about becoming "sanitizer dependant." Microbiologist James Scott says he's not aware of any evidence that suggests their use lowers the body's ability to combat bacteria on its own.

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Make time for breakfast
Skipping meals may actually promote weight gain and some research indicates that people who skip breakfast are much more likely to have weight problems than those who don't. NEWSCANADA.COM

Playing with pretty party sparkles

How to wear shimmery and glittery makeup

JANINE FALCON
for Metro News

You don't need sequins to claim your glitterati spotlight on the year's-end party circuit. Strategic use of this season's sparkle and shimmer cosmetics will do the beauty trick.

Of the two, shimmer is more wearable for faces of all ages. "It's an easy way to add glamour," says Physicians Formula celebrity makeup pro Joanna Schlip, who is artist to Rachel Bilson and Ellen Pompeo.

Schlip's favourite look is a wash of gold, copper or bronze shimmer powder over an espresso or chocolate-brown smoky eye lined with black pencil. "Highlight your brow-bones with gold, and sweep shimmer under the lower lashes, too," she says.

Definitely rock a shimmery lip with shimmery eyes, but choose colour based on your eye makeup. Schlip likes a bold mouth with a gold eye. Her key bold-lip tip: "Prep with a stain first so that as your gloss fades you won't end up with that ugly colour outline." If you go for a dark smoky eye, however, choose a light lip hue.

Balance all that sheen with subtle cheeks that glow rather than glimmer. Avoid anything with a frosty finish.

If you prefer less shiny shadow, go for a touch of gleam wherever the light hits your face, advises Toronto-based artist Kevin Smith, who has worked with Kirsten Dunst and Helen Mirren. "Anyone can wear shimmery highlight on the brow bones, tops of cheek bones, down the centre of the nose and on the bow of the lips," he says. Champagne or white is especially pretty at the inner corners of the eyes.

Smith also says a sparing approach is best, so whether you choose a cream or powder formula, always dab excess from fingers or brush on the back of your other hand before applying it to your face.

Best left to the under-30 set, glitter adds a twinkle as liner along the upper lashes. Smith says to hold off on foundation until after your glitter application so you can easily wipe away stray particles.

For New Year's Eve, Smith's suggests that adventurous types might try painting a little glitter triangle on the centre of the lids, with the base toward the lashline. And why not add a smaller upside-down triangle under eyes, harlequin style? "It's a theatrical look, great with an 80s-vibe batwing dress and frizzed-out hair," he says. "It's not for the makeup meek, but what's fun about makeup is showing up with something you wouldn't normally do."

COURTESY OF MAC COSMETICS

Use sweeps of gold, silver and bronze to get that glowing look this holiday party season.

LEFT: The Body Shop Define & Sparkle black-with-silver-sparkle eyeliner plus black-gel-with-holographic-glitter mascara topcoat, $18

RIGHT: Elizabeth Arden High Shine Lip Gloss in Sparkling Ruby, $20

LEFT: Vasanti Shimmer Powder in Sand Dune (golden bronze), $14

ABOVE: Physicians Formula Organic Wear 100% Natural Origin Blush, $18.79

LEFT: Lise Watier Mini Glitter Liners Set, $29

BELOW: Physicians Formula Shimmer Strips Custom Bronzer Blush & Eye Shadow in Vegas Strip $19.99

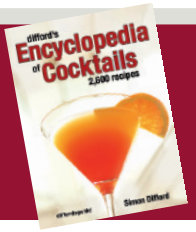
ABOVE: MAC MischiefMakers Pigments/Glitter in Sexpot Smoky $38.50

2010: So long, spot. We're through.

New preservative-free food line

Paleo Brands, Inc. is introducing a new gourmet entrée and snack line that will launch Jan. 4. The line will consist of unprocessed, preservative-free, grass fed meats, wild caught fish, vegetables, fruits and nuts. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Food



Cocktail encyclopedia

Simon Difford is addicted to cocktails. So much so that he's made and sampled 2,600 mixed drinks during his career as a bar owner and founder of his own import company in London, England. Now for those who want to learn more about making cocktails, Difford's Encyclopedia of Cocktails, 2600 Recipes (Firefly, hardcover, $45) has just been published. The book features photos of finished cocktails with their recipes and origin. THE CANADIAN PRESS

EDITOR: ANN-MARIE.COLACINO@METRONEWS.CA

Personal Gourmet recipe of the month — ROSE REISMAN

Have your cake & eat it too!

The holiday season is all about decadent desserts.

I love the combination of chocolate and cheesecake. These recipes include variations on both these delicious ingredients. The best part is that they are all conscious of calories and fat. So you can actually have your cake and eat it too!

Marble mocha cheesecake, above, and chocolate sour cream cheesecake squares, right.

Marble Mocha Cheesecake

Coffee and chocolate go so well with this creamy cheese batter. You can double this recipe: bake it in a 10-inch pan and add another 10 minutes to the baking time, baking until the center is still loose.

PREP TIME: 15 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 40 MINUTES
SERVES 12

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 ½ cups chocolate wafer crumbs
- 2 Tbsp water
- 2 Tbsp sugar
- 1 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 ⅔ cups smooth light ricotta
- ⅓ cup softened light cream cheese
- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- 1 egg
- ⅓ cup light sour cream or 2 per cent yogurt
- 1 ½ Tbsp all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 2 tsp instant coffee granules
- 2 tsp hot water
- 3 Tbsp semi-soft chocolate chips
- 1 tsp vegetable oil

Make ahead: Refrigerate for up to 3 days. Freeze up to 2 weeks

METHOD:

1. Spray an 8-inch springform pan with cooking oil. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. For the crust, combine the crumbs, sugar, water and oil. Mix thoroughly. Press into the bottom and partially up the sides of the prepared springform pan.
3. For the filling, beat the ricotta, cream cheese, sugar, egg, sour cream, flour and vanilla in a large bowl or food processor until well blended. Dissolve the coffee granules in the hot water. Add to the batter and mix until incorporated. Pour the batter over the crust and smooth the top.
4. Place the chocolate chips and oil in a small bowl and microwave on medium high for 30 seconds or just until soft. Drizzle the melted chocolate over the top of the batter. Draw a knife or spatula through the batter several times to create a marbled effect.
5. Bake for 35 to 40 minutes. The center will be slightly loose when you jiggle the cake.
6. Cool on a rack. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours before removing the sides of the pan and serving.

Chocolate Sour Cream Cheesecake Squares

Chocolate cheesecake in any way, shape or form is not to be refused. These luscious squares have a brownie-type crust that's simply mouth-watering. They freeze beautifully and my children love to eat them frozen—they say it tastes like a creamy frozen chocolate bar! To get chocolate chunks, use a sharp knife to shave off pieces from a solid block of chocolate.

PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 25 MINUTES
SERVES 16

INGREDIENTS:

Crust
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 3 Tbsp unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 egg
- ½ tsp pure vanilla extract
- ⅔ cup all-purpose flour

Filling
- ⅔ cup granulated sugar
- 2 Tbsp unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 Tbsp all-purpose flour
- ⅔ cup smooth light ricotta
- ¼ cup light cream cheese, softened
- 2 Tbsp low-fat sour cream
- 1 large egg
- ½ tsp pure vanilla extract

Topping
- 1 oz white or semi-sweet chocolate chips

METHOD:

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Spray an 8-inch square baking dish with cooking oil.
2. For the crust, combine the sugar, cocoa, oil, egg, and vanilla in a bowl. Stir in the flour, mixing just until combined. Pat the mixture into the bottom of the prepared dish.
3. For the filling, combine the sugar, cocoa, flour, ricotta, cream cheese, sour cream, egg and vanilla in a food processor. Purée until the mixture is smooth.
4. Spread it over the crust.
5. Bake in the center of the oven for 20 to 25 minutes. The center will still be slightly loose in the middle when the pan is jiggled.
6. Sprinkle with the chocolate, cool to room temperature on a rack and refrigerate until chilled.

About Rose

Rose Reisman is an author, media personality, nutritionist, and the inspiration behind a fresh food delivery service, Personal Gourmet, and new website, The Art of Living Well. Visit Rose at rosereisman.com & personalgourmet.ca

LiquidAssets

Peter Rockwell

metronews.ca/liquidassets

Dinner pairing

While I'm sure some of you would like a liquid recommendation for roast beef (try a full-bodied cabernet sauvignon), ham (pick a New World pinot noir), lamb (a medium-bodied Aussie shiraz) or even lobster (nothing beats a ripe New Zealand sauvignon blanc); here are some thoughts on matching wine with the big bird and its varied side dishes. A classic roast turkey dinner is surprising forgiving when it comes to a wine partner.

In reds think California Zinfandel, Italian Chianti or a Frenchmen from Beaujolais or the Southern Rhône Valley.

For a bottle of white, choose a mid-priced chardonnay from Australia, Chile or France's Burgundy region or a German with a touch of sweetness like **Moselland's 2008 Ars Vitis Riesling ($9.95 - $17.99)** - a bright, refreshing wine that will go with just about anything you plan on serving along with Tom turkey.

Swift, Depp favourite celebs
The results are in. Popeater.com has names Taylor Swift and Johnny Depp as its favourite celebrities of the year after asking its readers. Jennifer Aniston and George Clooney were the runner-ups. **POPEATER.COM**

Entertainment

Bond Girl
Susan Boyle is being tipped to record the next James Bond song. The Scottish star is said to be thrilled at the prospect of being chosen to lend her voice to the movie, which is due in 2011. **FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK**

EDITOR: DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA

Swift named top entertainer

It's a love story, baby.

Taylor Swift sang those words about a young romance, but they apply just as well to America's feelings for the 20-year-old country singer. Swift, adding to the heap of awards already bestowed on her, has been voted The Associated Press entertainer of the year.

Swift was chosen by newspaper editors and broadcast producers across the country in a survey of AP members. She follows last year's winner, Tina Fey, and 2007's pick, Stephen Colbert.

"I am so honoured and so excited," Swift said in an interview by phone with the AP. "This was so unexpected, and I could not be more grateful."

Though her second album, Fearless, came out in late 2008, Swift was ubiquitous in 2009.

She found critical acclaim for her autobiographical and infectious songwriting, exemplified in tunes such as Love Story and White Horse. She led a sold-out tour across 52 cities in North America.

She won album of the year from the Country Music Awards and the Country Music Association Awards. She hosted Saturday Night Live and performed at the Grammys. She won five American Music Awards, including artist of the year.

At one point, she had eight songs on the Billboard Hot 100 chart.

Taylor Swift was voted entertainer of the year by Associated Press.

The MTV Video Music Awards, was more of a mixed blessing for Swift. She was accepting the award for best female video (the first VMA to be given to a country act) when Kanye West stormed the stage and interrupted her speech. West's stunt set off a media storm that perhaps said as much about Swift's popularity (fans and musicians alike came to her defence) than it did about West's.

Among those who voted for Swift for entertainer of the year was Danielle L. Kiracofe, entertainment editor for the Stars and Stripes, the military newspaper.

"In a time of 'made' musicians, she writes her own songs and has her own sparkly style," said Kiracofe. "She's managed to do all of this with grace, class and poise — and without uttering a swear word, dancing on a pole or wearing next to nothing. At the age of 20."

Ellis Widner, style editor for the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, applauded Swift for superseding generational boundaries.

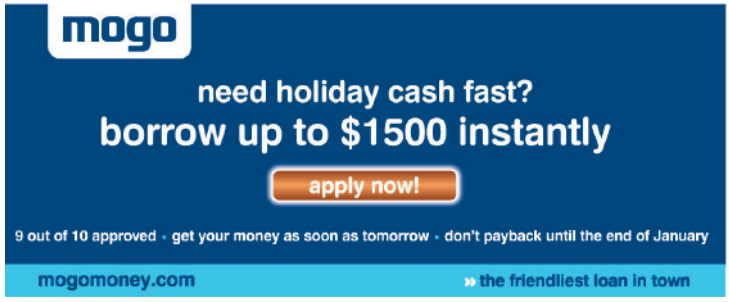
"She defines crossover appeal and would seem to be a strong business model in a declining music business," Widner said.

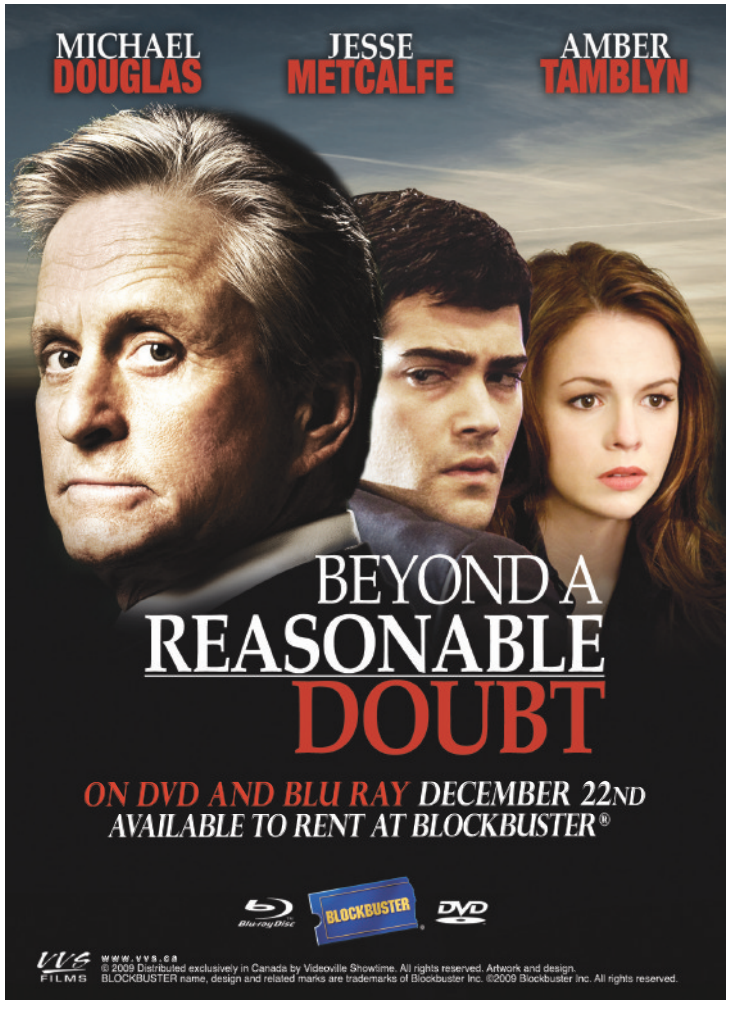
At year's end, Swift's life is in flux. She'll soon move out from home with her family, making this Christmas an emotional one for her. She may well have more trophies to haul in, too. In January, she'll be attending the Grammys, where she's nominated for eight awards.

"I love to plan 20 steps ahead of myself, and it's really fun competition game that I play with myself, trying to top what I've done last." **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Top entertainment stories of 2009

1. Michael Jackson dies: On June 25, Jackson was pronounced dead at the age of 50.
2. Susan Boyle becomes overnight sensation: Boyle became an international star after she sang I Dreamed a Dream on Britain's Got Talent.
3. Late-Night swap: On NBC, Conan O'Brien took over The Tonight Show, and Jay Leno moved to 10 p.m..
4. Walter Cronkite dies: The passing was a reminder of a bygone era in broadcasting.
5. David Letterman affair: Letterman alleged that he had been the victim of an extortion attempt and confessed to having affairs with his staff.
6. Chris Brown assaults Rihanna: Chris Brown assaulted Rihanna, an altercation that led to Brown pleading guilty to felony assault in June.
7. Kanye West robs Taylor Swift: West interrupted Swift's acceptance speech for best female video.
8. Live video explodes on the web: Millions online watched the inauguration of U.S. President Barack Obama.
9. Kate and Jon Gosselin split: TLC's Jon&Kate Plus 8 was winning its best ratings in its fifth season when the pair announced their separation.
10. Heath Ledger wins posthumous Oscar: Ledger won an Oscar for The Dark Knight. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**





Ricci releases new film

Christina Ricci has made a new short-film for DKNY. The Monster actress features in four different scenarios in the film, designed to show off the ways which the fashion house's leather Eldridge bag can be used. FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK

Movie experiences that defined the decade

STEVE GOW
for Metro Canada

Movie feature

From computer-animated innovation to comic-book crusaders coming to life on the big-screen, the past decade in movies has been as remarkable as any period in cinema's century of existence.

Sure, it also gave us such goose eggs as Gigli and Battlefield Earth but for every box-office bomb there's been a fantastic work of art that has transformed its genre and explored imagination. Here's a look at the best cinematic experiences of the last ten years.

Lord of the Rings

Of course there were actually three movies, but Peter Jackson's daunting adaptations should truly only be considered as one. Either way, this stirring trilogy earned 30 Oscar nominations and won the Best Picture in 2004.

The Dark Knight

The decade's only film to solidly give the reigning all-time box office champ (Titanic) a run for its money, this Batman thriller is history's top-earning comic-book movie. Plus, who could forget Heath Ledger's Oscar-winning turn as the malevolent Joker?

No Country for Old Men

The Coen Brothers continued to shine with this amazing rendition of Cormac McCarthy's harrowing bestseller. Not only did it win the Best Picture Oscar but Javier Bardem did for the term "friend-o" what Jack Nicholson did for "Here's Johnny!" in 1980's The Shining.

Memento

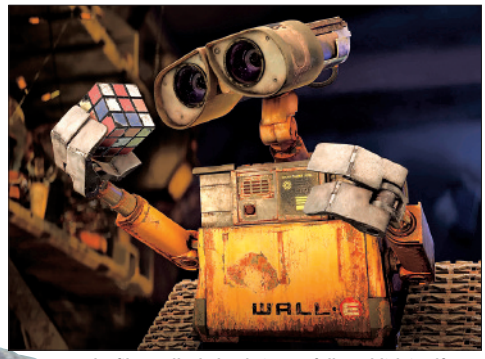
Filmmaker Chris Nolan (The Dark Knight) rose to fame with this mindbender about a man trying to discover who murdered his wife. The problem: His memory isn't too clear so the narrative is as mysterious as his concussed mind.

Wall-E

Even though it was obvious before this 2008 hit, Pixar fully established itself with Wall-E as the decade's most progressive studio providing family fare that's intelligent, challenging and entertaining for both kids and adults.

There were several other films over the past decade worth mentioning as well: Eccentric screenwriter Charlie Kaufman teamed up with director Michel Gondry for the absurdist rom-com Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind; Martin Scorsese won a long-awaited Oscar with his cop-drama The Departed and Guillermo del Toro even created one of the decade's most amazing movies with Pan's Labyrinth. And even though that fantasy flick may not have achieved the same legend at the box-office, it shows that the past decade will be perhaps best remembered for the promise of what's to come in the next ten years.

Lord of the Rings transformed the epic adventure genre and set the tone for similar movies throughout the decade.



The film Wall-E helped Pixar to full establish itself as a Hollywood player during the '00s.

Top 10 in '09

It's been a very good year for movies. After all, recent reports have shown that admissions are up over last year (which is necessary when blockbusters like Avatar are costing upwards of $500 million to make).

But with the past twelve months giving us everything from big-budget thrillers like Star Trek and Watchmen to edgy indie dramas like Paranormal Activity and Humpday, it's never easy to compile the best of the best. Instead, I scoured ten film critic associations' lists in order to find the best movies of 2009. As the cream rose to the top, here is what became the most popular films of 2009:

1. The Hurt Locker
2. Inglourious Basterds
3. Up
4. Up in the Air
5. Precious
6. District 9
7. A Serious Man
8. (500) Days of Summer
9. Fantastic Mr. Fox
10. The Messenger

STEVE GOW/FOR METRO CANADA

Simpsons turning public off on nuclear power?

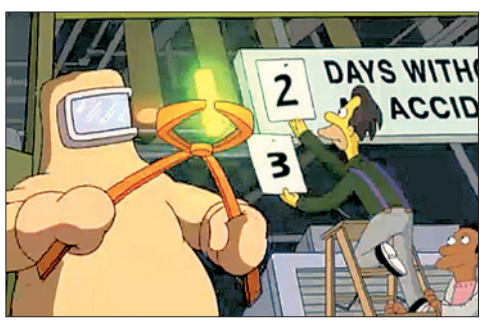
TV An American philosophy professor who has edited a series of books about how TV programs such as The Simpsons have affected popular culture says many people may be concerned about nuclear power from watching the animated cartoon show.

Dr. Bill Irwin, a philosophy professor at King's College in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., says Homer — the bumbling main character in The Simpsons who works at a nuclear power plant — has perhaps helped to put a negative spin on nuclear power by doing such things on the show as trying to stop a meltdown by randomly pressing buttons on a console. He also points out that the owner of the nuclear power plant in The Simpsons, Mr. Burns, is portrayed as a cold-hearted, greedy industrialist. But the show's most intelligent character, Homer's daughter, Lisa, is portrayed as a staunch environmental advocate.

"She's very eco-friendly and very much against nuclear power and the nuclear power plant run by Mr. Burns," Irwin said during a recent interview on a Saskatchewan radio talk show.

The editor of the book The Simpsons and Philosophy says television and movies about nuclear disasters such as Chernobyl and Three Mile Island have also added to negative publicity surrounding nuclear power.

Irwin has also edited a series of similar books, which look at the effect of such TV shows as The Sopranos. THE CANADIAN PRESS



A philosophy professor has charged that The Simpsons has shaped the way people perceive nuclear power.

Polanski working while under house arrest

A Swiss newspaper is reporting that a friend of Roman Polanski says the director is finishing the edit of his latest movie Ghost while under house arrest. He says the movie maker is working and confident about the U.S. extradition request hanging over him. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sex Therapy album laying it on Thicke

Singer talks about his family's varied response to the latest cd and his move into acting

Robin Thicke's new CD is called Sex Therapy, but the sensual singer says guys have to think beyond the bedroom if they want to keep a woman happy.

Thicke's prescription for a satisfied woman includes the occasional foot rub, a dinner date, shopping sprees and listening sessions. But sex does play a part as well — hence the title of the album.

Q If you were a sex therapist and you had to give advice to a couple with intimacy issues — what would you say to them?

A First thing, they probably just need to slow down and look at each other again and get in a new environment. Maybe go to a different restaurant, go anywhere else, have her try on some new lingerie, buy her some new lingerie, make her feel sexy.

Maybe she needs to do something to make him feel sexy. But you can't ever give up on it because it's so easy to just start sitting there and the hours turn into days and the days turn into weeks and the next thing you know you ain't doing nothing with each other.

JEFF CHRISTENSEN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Recording artist Robin Thicke poses for a portrait in New York.

Q How did your family respond to the new music?

A The CD is so wild and some people, they're a little offended even though they love certain songs. They're like, 'Wow, you're getting so this and that.' I'm like, 'It's not that serious.' ... My older brother, who always liked my music very much but never gone over the top, he just said, 'I can't stop listening to it.' He said, 'This album is like great sex, I just want more and more and more of it.' And I was like, 'Wow, that's a pretty good advertisement.' (Laughs) ... But then my mom (actress Gloria Loring) hears it and (is like), 'Oh, it's a little aggressive for mommies.'

Q I hear will you be acting soon — tell me about that.

A I wouldn't want to bring down other actors by saying what I'm trying to do is acting. (Laughs) What they do is acting, I'm just trying. But I got a role in this animated film (Rio) with Anne Hathaway and a few other very talented people, where I play a bird.

Q I know your wife is pregnant — how does it feel to know you will be a father soon?

A It's extremely exciting. All day long when I get a little worried or scared or anxious or tired, I just say, Thank you God for, as of right now, a healthy child and a healthy wife and a happy home. In this world that should be enough to make a man happy for a day, you know what I mean? Every time I get a little frustrated I just thank God for those things.

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Murphy was sick ahead of her sudden death: Doctor

MEDICATION Brittany Murphy was ill with flu-like symptoms in the days before her death and prescription medications were taken from her home, the Los Angeles coroner's office said yesterday. The 32-year-old star of films such as Clueless and 8 Mile died Sunday morning after collapsing at her Hollywood Hills home. Paramedics tried to revive her, but she was pronounced dead at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. Assistant Chief Coroner Ed Winter said his office conducted an autopsy yesterday to try to determine what killed the actress, but will defer releasing a cause of death until after toxicology tests are complete.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kenya's Style
Kenya Hunt
Read the blog at metronews.ca/kenyasstyle

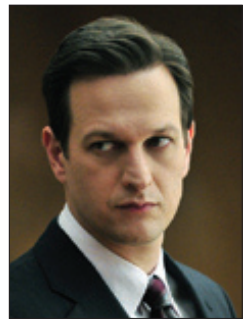
12/22/09

VA	Vu	SC	C	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
primetime	251	308	3 CBC	Wheel Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	A Christmas Story ★★★★ (1983) Peter Billingsley. (CC)				CBC News: The National (N)		(:05) The Hour
	254	-	8 OMNI	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Omni News: Mandarin Edition		News: Cantonese Edition		Omni News: Punjabi Edition		The Simpsons
	250	321	9 CTV	Corner Gas	Degrassi: TNG	The Rankin Family Reunion		Deck the Halls (2005) Gabrielle Carteris. Premiere. (CC) (DVS)				CTV News
	-	-	10 JOY	Frasier (CC)	The Insider	Islam 101 (CC)		Enigma (CC)		P3	Ek Noor	New Day
	252	336	11 GTV	Entertainment	ET Canada	NCIS "Silent Night" (CC)		The Christmas Choir (2008, Drama) Jason Gedrick. (CC)				News
	256	389	12 VI	Sue Thomas: F.B.Eye		Lives of the Saints (2005) (Part 1 of 2) Sophia Loren. (CC)				Stargate Atlantis		A News (N)
	253	359	13 CITY	Murdoch Mysteries		The Biggest Loser "Where Are They Now" (CC)				The Jay Leno Show (N) (CC)		The CityNews
	-	-	14 CW	The Office	The Office	90210 "To New Beginnings!"		Melrose Place "Pilot" (CC)		Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Frasier (CC)
	289	381	15 CBS	Entertainment	The Insider	NCIS "Silent Night" (CC)		NCIS: Los Angeles "Killshot"		The Good Wife "Crash"		KIRO 7 News
	287	379	16 NBC	Evening Mag.	Inside Edition	The Biggest Loser "Where Are They Now" (CC)				The Jay Leno Show (N) (CC)		KING 5 News
	602	568	19 W	Stolen Miracle (2001, Drama) Leslie Hope, Hugh Thompson.				Home by Christmas (2006, Drama) Linda Hamilton.				Grocery Bag
	288	380	21 ABC	Wheel Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Amer. Funniest Home Videos		Scrubs (N)	Better Off Ted	Christmas at the White House		KOMO 4 News
	-	-	23 KVOS	M*A*S*H	Seinfeld	A Wedding for Bella ★★★ (2001) Scott Baio, John Seitz.				Seinfeld	King	Cheers (CC)
	291	383	27 PBS	Life (Part 2)	Steves Europe	Nova "The Last Great Ape"		Frontline "From Jesus to Christ: The First Christians" (CC)				Independent
	290	382	28 FOX	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Carrie Underwood: An All-Star Holiday Special (CC)				Q13 FOX News at Ten (N)		Family Guy
	-	364	43 PBS	Frontline "The Madoff Affair"		Keeping Up	Being Served	Tavis Smiley	Charlie Rose (N) (CC)		Nova "The Last Great Ape"	
	296	654	34 SBK	The Office	Name Is Earl	Frasier (CC)	'70s Show	South Park	Half & Half	Paid Program	Hatchett	Paid Program
	298	653	35 TLA	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	90210 "To New Beginnings!"		Melrose Place "Pilot" (CC)		KTLA Prime News (N) (CC)		Friends (CC)
	295	651	36 WGN	WGN News at Nine (N) (CC)		Family Guy	Two/Half Men	According-Jim	Friends (CC)	Friends (CC)	Maury Paternity stories. (CC)	
	297	652	37 WPX	PIX News at Ten Tong. (N)		Two/Half Men	Friends (CC)	Friends (CC)	According-Jim	Family Guy	South Park	Scrubs (CC)
	199	311	76 STR	CTV News	NTV Latenight News		Late Show W/Letterman		Late Late Show/Ferguson		Inside Edition	Seinfeld
news	502	390	26 NW	CBC News: the fifth estate		CBC News: The National (N)		CBC News: The National (N)		CBC News: the fifth estate		National
	500	500	33 CNN	Anderson Cooper 360 (CC)				Larry King Live		Anderson Cooper 360 (CC)		Cooper 360
sports	407	419	22 RSP	Canucks	NHL Hockey Nashville Predators at Vancouver Canucks. (Subject to Blackout)					Sportsnet Connected (Live)		Sportsnet
	400	400	30 TSN	Hockey			SportsCentre (Live) (CC)		World Poker Tour: Season 7		Strength	SportsCentre
	411	457	49 OLN	Ghost Hunters (CC)		Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Survivorman (CC)		Ghost Hunters (CC)		Bounty Hunter
	410	403	54 SCR	(5:00) Court Surfing		Score Now		Score Now		Score Now		Final Score
	417	406	55 SC	Dangerous Drives		Pass Time	Pass Time	Monster Jam		Super Bikes!	Super Bikes!	Drives
	416	409	144 GLF	Fútbol Uruguayo		MLS Weekly	Gol TV News	Toronto-Today	MLS Weekly	Paid Program	Gol TV News	Gol TV News
family	552	543	25 YTV	Year Without a Santa Claus		Crazy for Christmas (2005, Drama) Andrea Roth. (CC)				Family Biz	Prank Patrol	Adrenaline
	555	545	50 TEL	A Dennis the Menace Christmas (2007) Robert Wagner. (CC)				Futurama	King of Hill	American Dad	Futurama	Chicken
	557	541	51 FAM	Sonny Chance	Zack & Cody	Overruled!	Han. Montana	Wizards-Place	Latest Buzz	Ned's School	Cory in House	That's-Raven
	553	546	53 TRE	Babar (CC)	Zigby	Max & Ruby	Dragon	Backyard	Ni Hao	Go, Diego, Go!	Franklin	Comfy Couch
cable variety	268	354	5 KNO	Frontiers of Construction		Stephen Fry in America (CC)		Men in Red Suits (N) (CC)		Riddle of the Polar Sky (CC)		Offspring (N)
	575	583	60 CMT	Home Imp.	Home Imp.	Paul Brandt's Christmas		The Most Wonderful Time of the Year (2008) Henry Winkler.				Home Imp.
	570	580	62 MM	Teen Choice 2009 Honoring the year's teen icons. (CC)				Live at Much "Justin Bieber"		My Date	disBAND	RapCity (CC)
	600	564	63 H&G	House	House	Holmes on Homes (CC)		Top 10	Design Inc.	Pure Design	Genevieve	House
	615	520	61 A&E	Paranormal	Paranormal	Celebrity Ghost Stories (CC)		Paranormal	Paranormal	Psychic Kids: Paranormal		Paranormal
	628	584	62 SPKE	Ways to Die	MANswers	MANswers (CC)		MANswers	MANswers	MANswers	MANswers	MANswers
	521	560	64 TLC	Little Couple	Little Couple	Table for 12	Table for 12	18 Kids-Count	17 Kids-Count	Little Couple	Little Couple	Cmas Lights
	616	522	65 SHO	The Outer Limits "Dark Rain"		Christmas Town (2008) Nicole de Boer, Patrick Muldoon. (CC)				Bones (CC)		NCIS (CC)
	620	523	40 BVO	Johnny Cash	Beyond	Law & Order "Big Bang"		Without a Trace (CC)		The Man on the Train ★★★ (2002) (CC)		
	601	562	41 SLC	Bulging Brides	Bulging Brides	ET Canada	Whatever	Work Out (CC)		Brat Camp (CC)		Runway
	520	505	42 DIS	Time Warp (N)		Daily Planet (CC)		Destroyed	Destroyed	Time Warp		How It's Made
	522	506	44 HIS	Ancient Discoveries (N) (CC)		Cities of the Underworld		Cities of the Underworld		Ultimate Engineering (CC)		Crime Stories
	627	528	45 SPC	Supernatural (CC)		Stargate SG-1 "New Ground"		Star Trek: Next Gener.		Star Trek: Voyager "Elogium"		Medium (CC)
	294	650	47 TBS	The Office	The Office	Lopez Tonight		Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Sex and-City	Sex and-City	Lopez Tonight
	619	525	48 TROP	'70s Show	'70s Show	The Outer Limits "Birthright"		ET Canada	Switch (N)	Family Guy	'70s Show	'70s Show
	603	561	69 FN	Good Eats (CC)		Iron Chef America (N) (CC)		Unwrapped Holiday treats.		Heston's Feasts (CC)		Good Eats
	-	-	93 AMC	(:15) Grease ★★★ (1978, Musical) John Travolta, Olivia Newton-John.						(:45) All I Want for Christmas ★★ (1991) Ethan Randall. (CC)		
	626	547	57 COM	Air Farce	22 Minutes	Corner Gas	22 Minutes	The Simpsons	South Park	Corner Gas	Jon Dore	Daily Show
	320	621	90 CEN	(6:00) The Stone Angel ★★		What Doesn't Kill You ★★★ (2008) (CC)				(:45) Defiance ★★ (2008) Daniel Craig, Liev Schreiber. (CC)		
	581	566	101 MTV	Teen Mom "Fallout" (N) (CC)		MTV Live	Impact (CC)	Jersey Shore (CC)		Teen Mom "Fallout" (CC)		MTV Live
	261	394	102 V	Man Who Saved C'mas		Quartet Plus Four-Christmas		The Man Who Saved Christmas (2002) Jason Alexander.				Hallelujah!
	-	-	105 MUL	Sewing Maid	Boys Over Flo	Il Caffe		In Germany	Euromaxx	Schauplatz	Euro. Journal	Patrol World

critics'corner

The Good Wife

Will and Alicia (Josh Charles, Julianna Margulies) have only 72 hours to prove who is responsible for a freight train crash that officials are trying to blame on three engineers, whose widows are being denied their pensions. At home, Alicia and Jackie (Mary Beth Peil) clash over taking the children to visit their father (Chris Noth) in prison. Christine Baranski also stars in "Crash." 10 PM on CBS



Carrie Underwood: An All-Star Holiday Special

The Grammy-winning and multiplatinum country singer performs holiday songs in addition to selections from her albums, including her new release, "Play On," in this encore presentation of her two-hour holiday special. Among the performers joining Underwood onstage are Dolly Parton, Brad Paisley, Tony and Emmy winner Kristin Chenoweth, and "American Idol" winner David Cook. 8 PM on FOX

Fatone awaits second child

'N Sync star Joey Fatone looks set to become a father again in 2010. The pop star-turned-TV presenter's wife Kelly Baldwin is due to give birth to the couple's second child in January, usmagazine.com reports. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Celebrity Buzz

Zeta-Jones flashes Broadway auditorium

PEEKABOO Some Broadway theatergoers got a little more bang for their buck at a recent performance of A Little Night Music when Catherine Zeta-Jones inadvertently flashed a section of the auditorium, according to Page Six.

"I couldn't believe it. No wonder Michael Douglas looks so happy," an audience member says. "The couple sitting next to me also saw it and poked each other." METRO WORLD NEWS

Britney Spears posts fiction alerts on website: Report

DO YOU REALLY CARE ANYWAY? Having trouble sorting fact from fiction when it comes to Britney Spears? Allow Britney herself to help you out, people.com reports.

The pop star has introduced a new "Bulls—t Alerts" page on her website, meant to deliver "the inside scoop straight from Britney and her team on what's true and what's bull."

The page launches by focusing on the bull, and lots of it. A post titled "The Year in BS" presents a list of the 75 most outlandish media stories reported about Britney over the past year, as determined by the Spears team.

"There were more then 13,000 stories written about Britney in 2009," says the post. "We ranked the ones we believe were the most ridiculous. Either because they were factually inaccurate, because they reported the patently absurd, or because we believe they are simply offensive to the sensibilities."

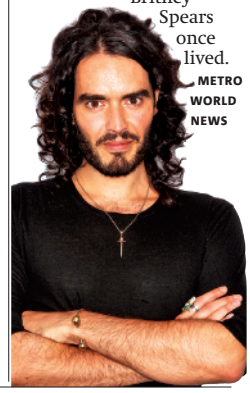
The No. 1 story on the list, from the Mirror in the U.K., claimed that Britney was dating Indian choreographer Sandip Soparrkar.

Also in the top 10: reports that Spears, 28, wasn't prepared for her world tour, that she thought her father was drugging her, that she was dating music producer Dallas Austin, and that she filmed a music video topless. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Brand, Perry purchase Brit's old estate

HOLLYWOOD LIVING Things seem to be going swingingly for Russell Brand and Katy Perry, as the British comedian has reportedly purchased a home to share with Perry, according to Hollyscoop.

The property in question is a $3.5 million US, seven-bedroom mansion in The Summit estate in Los Angeles, the same gated community where Britney Spears once lived. METRO WORLD NEWS



Celebrity tweets

Neil Patrick Harris suffers from the snow like everyone else, Lindsay Lohan tries to clear things up after getting hacked and Ashton Kutcher pays his respects to Brittany Murphy.

• @ActuallyNPH Holiday Airline Madness! Flight to NY cancelled, mad dash to find seats in full planes. Feel like I'm on the Amazing Race. In the bad way.

• @lindsaylohan I never twittered anything about rihanna, I actually just had to email someone to reset my password. Waste of paper to all you tabloids :)

• @aplusk 2day the world lost a little piece of sunshine. My deepest condolences go out 2 Brittany's family, her husband, & her amazing mother Sharon. see you on the other side kid. METRO WORLD NEWS

Winehouse causes stir during Christmastime pantomime

NO STAGE FRIGHT Amy Winehouse shocked theatre-goers by hurling abuse at the cast and reportedly kicking the theatre's manager, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The troubled star is being investigated by British police after her antics at the pantomime — a traditional musical comedy production, typically performed around Christmas — which saw her disrupt the performance of Cinderella by heckling its stars before attacking front-of-house manager Richard Pound.

Winehouse — who is thought to have been drinking — reportedly spent more than half an hour of the first act of the performance yelling expletives. METRO WORLD NEWS

Miller invites Law over for the holidays

HEY JUDE, TAKE MY CHRISTMAS AND MAKE IT BETTER Sienna Miller has invited Jude Law to spend Christmas with her, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The actress — who has reportedly rekindled her relationship with the Sherlock Holmes star — has now asked him to join her at a secluded beachfront villa in Barbados where she will be spending the festive break with friends.

A source told The Sun newspaper: "She is jetting to the Caribbean (today) and has asked Jude if he would like to join her.

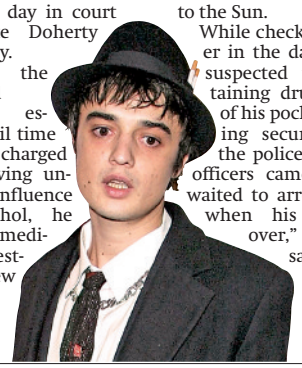
"He's very much considering the proposal." METRO WORLD NEWS

Doherty busted upon leaving courtroom

DRUGS IN HIS POCKET It was a rough day in court for Pete Doherty yesterday.

While the troubled rocker escaped jail time for drug charged and driving under the influence of alcohol, he was immediate arrested on new charges while leaving the courthouse, according to the Sun.

While checking in earlier in the day, a packet suspected to be containing drugs fell out of his pocket, prompting security to call the police. "About six officers came over and waited to arrest Doherty when his case was over," a source says. METRO WORLD NEWS



The Weather Network
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Today Partly cloudy 5°/ -2°
Wednesday Sunny 2° / -2°
Thursday Sunny 3°/ -2°
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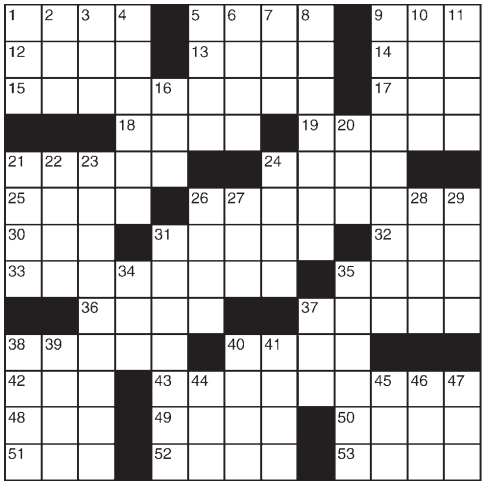
For more delicious Metro recipes, visit: **metronews.ca/food**

Take Five



ACROSS

1 Muslim pilgrimage
5 Omit
9 Omega preceder
12 Jai —
13 Golden Rule word
14 Rowing need
15 Cheating
17 "Birth — Nation"
18 Bird house?
19 Page or Pompeo
21 Smartens (up)
24 Book after Joel
25 Pale
26 Starving
30 Modernday evidence
31 Legerdemain
32 Gorilla
33 Jogged untogged?
35 Manitoba tribe
36 Swiss artist Paul
37 Creator
38 Bigfoot's family?
40 Part mine, part yours
42 Eggs
43 One-piece swimwear
48 Lair
49 Wedding shower?
50 Liniment target
51 Deluge refuge
52 Raw minerals
53 City on the Rhone

DOWN

1 Possessed
2 Foreman foe
3 Pickle holder
4 Unlicensed taxi
5 Dines
6 Entanglement
7 Judge Lance
8 Attack on one's opinions
9 Sly one with a cue
10 Secure
11 Persia, now
16 "Of course"
20 Part of UCLA
21 Bankrolls
22 "— It Romantic?"
23 Reality show for budding entrepreneurs
24 In the thick of
26 Charlatan
27 Census statistic
28 Duel tool
29 Antelope's playmate
31 Orchestra leader
34 Inventor Whitney
35 Informal
37 "— Miniver"
38 "Star Wars" sage
39 Always
40 Formerly
41 Banjos' kin
44 Melody
45 Unfriendly
46 However, in poetry
47 D.C. VIP

Sudoku

For more/less challenging Sudoku puzzles, visit metronews.ca

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

4		3				1		8
	9		1		8		5	
7			5		9			2
		8	3		5	4		
		9	6		4	3		
8			2		7			6
	1		4		6		3	
5		7				8		4

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

E	Z	I	O	■	M	E	A	■
G	O	L	D	B	E	R	G	■
G	O	L	D	M	I	N	E	■
■	■	■	J	O	N	■	L	A
A	D	H	O	C	■	D	I	S
B	O	O	B	■	M	E	M	P
E	L	L	■	L	E	W	I	S
■	T	Y	P	E	S	E	T	■
■	■	■	A	S	H	Y	■	M
I	N	S	I	T	U	■	A	A
R	O	O	D	■	G	O	L	D
K	U	D	U	■	G	O	L	D
S	N	A	P	■	E	P	S	■

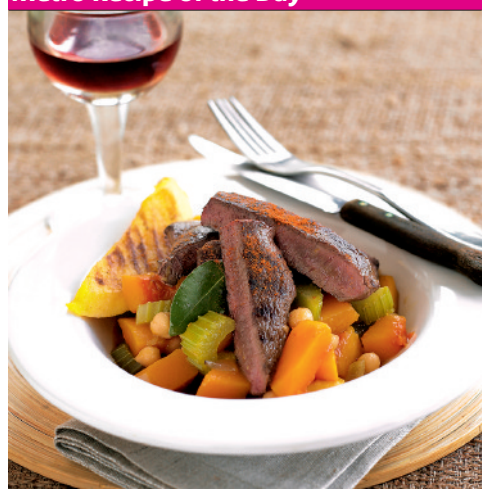
G	E	E	K	■	■	■	■	■
■	L	I	R	A	■	■	■	■
■	I	R	O	N	■	■	■	■
L	A	T	E	S	T	■	■	■
■	D	I	S	C	■	■	■	■
M	E	M	P	H	I	S	■	■
■	D	O	C	■	■	■	■	■
H	E	R	O	■	■	■	■	■
M	E	A	T	Y	■	■	■	■
■	A	A	A	■	■	■	■	■
G	O	L	D	R	U	S	H	■
G	O	L	D	S	T	A	R	■
E	P	S	■	T	E	D	S	■

7	4	3	1	6	5	8	2	9
1	2	6	9	8	4	7	5	3
9	5	8	7	2	3	4	6	1
3	8	9	6	4	2	1	7	5
5	1	4	8	3	7	2	9	6
6	7	2	5	9	1	3	4	8
8	3	5	4	7	6	9	1	2
2	6	7	3	1	9	5	8	4
4	9	1	2	5	8	6	3	7

On the web

For more games and 60 additional daily cartoon strips, visit metronews.ca

Metro Recipe of the Day



Venison with Chunky Vegetable Braise

INGREDIENTS:

2 tbsp (25 ml) olive oil
3 shallots, roughly chopped
1 lb (500 g) butternut squash, peeled and diced
2 celery sticks, sliced
1 bay leaf
1 1/4 cup (300 ml) beef stock
2 tbsp (25 ml) Worcestershire sauce
4 venison steaks
398 mL can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
1 tsp (5 ml) smoked or regular paprika

METHOD:

1. Heat oil in a large, heavy-based pot and fry shallots, squash and celery over fairly high heat, stirring occasionally, until beginning to brown. Preheat broiler to high.
2. Add bay leaf, stock and 1 tbsp (15 ml) Worcestershire sauce, and bring to boil. Reduce heat, then cover and simmer until vegetables are just tender. Adjust seasoning if necessary.
3. Meanwhile, brush venison steaks with remaining Worcestershire sauce and cook 4-5 minutes on each side. Cut into thick pieces, if you like.
4. Stir chickpeas into pot of vegetables and bring back to boil. Spoon vegetables onto serving plates and top with venison. Sprinkle with the paprika and serve. **SERVES 4**

rd.ca
For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to rd.ca or check out Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!

Horoscopes by Sally Brompton

sallybrompton.com

For Sally's expanded daily and weekend horoscopes, visit metronews.ca

ARIES ♈
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
This is the ideal time to make an impression on people in positions of power. If you are hoping for a promotion the Sun will help you be noticed.

TAURUS ♉
APRIL 21-MAY 21
You can work alone if you wish but the planets indicate you need to join forces with like-minded people if you want to see your dream become a reality.

GEMINI ♊
MAY 22-JUNE 21
Try not to be too concerned about what you own and earn because that could lead to conflict with someone whose needs may be at odds with your own.

CANCER ♋
JUNE 22-JULY 22
If you are serious about your aims and ambitions it would be wise to consult partners and colleagues before you do anything about them.

LEO ♌
JULY 23-AUG 23
Cosmic activity in the area of your chart that governs your daily routine will pile on the pressure over the next few days.

VIRGO ♍
AUG 24-SEPT 22
Because the Sun is transiting the most dynamic area of your chart you must aim higher than ever before.

LIBRA ♎
SEPT 23-OCT 23
You will have to deal with people today who, to say the least, are emotionally difficult and there may be times when you could scream at them to stop.

SCORPIO ♏
OCT 24-NOV 22
Words will come easy to you today and you will leave no one in any doubt what it is you mean and what it is you expect of them.

SAGITTARIUS ♐
NOV 23-DEC 21
Don't worry too much if your financial and business affairs are in a bit of a mess because the Sun's transit of the money area of your chart will help.

CAPRICORN ♑
DEC 22-JAN 20
If you want to start something new or if you want to change your life in some way now is the time to stop thinking about it and to start acting.

AQUARIUS ♒
JAN 21-FEB 18
This is generally a happy time of year for you but it could be one of the happiest ever if you face up to a fear that has been a constant in your life.

PISCES ♓
FEB 19-MARCH 20
Make the effort to get out and about and meet new and exciting people. You are an introvert but you should be be more adventurous.

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+Taxes & other fees (including service charges): $212

Varadero
Sol Sirenas Coral Resort • 3★
All-Inclusive • Standard rm.
Jan. 8 & 15 • 1 wk.
$899
+Taxes & other fees (including service charges): $212

Jamaica
Gran Bahia Principe Jamaica • 4 1/2★
All-Inclusive • Junior suite
Jan. 1, 15, 22 & 29 • 1 wk.
PRIVILEGES
$1149
+Taxes & other fees (including service charges): $271

Cancun / Riviera Maya
Royal Solaris Cancun • 4★
All-Inclusive
Deluxe lagoon view rm.
Feb. 6 • 1 wk.
$1049
+Taxes & other fees (including service charges): $275

Iberostar
Laguna Azul • 4 1/2★
All-Inclusive • Standard rm.
Jan. 8 – 22 • 1 wk.
$1189
+Taxes & other fees (including service charges): $212

Ixtapa / Zihuatanejo
Tesoro Ixtapa • 3 1/2★
All-Inclusive • Deluxe rm.
Jan. 2 & 16 • 1 wk.
$959
+Taxes & other fees (including service charges): $266

Barcelo Tucancun Beach • 4★
All-Inclusive • Standard rm.
Feb. 6 • 1 wk.
$1219
+Taxes & other fees (including service charges): $275

Jamaica
Sunset Jamaica Grande Resort & Spa • 4★
All-Inclusive • Standard rm.
Jan. 1 & 8 • 1 wk.
$899
+Taxes & other fees (including service charges): $271

Los Cabos
Barceló Los Cabos Palace Deluxe • 5★
All-Inclusive • Junior suite
Jan. 10 – 31 • 1 wk.
$999
+Taxes & other fees (including service charges): $264

Puerto Vallarta / Riviera Nayarit
Dreams Villamagna Nuevo Vallarta • 4 1/2★
All-Inclusive
Junior suite tropical view
Jan. 16 & 23 • 1 wk.
PRIVILEGES
$1169
+Taxes & other fees (including service charges): $263

DEAL to EUROPE
Paris via Toronto or Montreal
Hotel Cervantes Paris • 3★
Breakfast
Standard double rm.
Jan. 21, 22, 28 & 29 • 3 nts.
$747
+Taxes & other fees (including service charges): $424

DEAL on CRUISES
Celebrity Cruises[1]
Celebrity Summit℠
Southern Caribbean cruise
Flights to San Juan via Toronto
Oceanview stateroom, cat. 7
March 6 & 20 • 1 wk.
$1629
+Taxes & other fees (including service charges): $279

PALACE RESORTS

Punta Cana via Calgary
Moon Palace Casino, Golf & Spa Resort • 5★
All-Inclusive • Caribbean suite
Jan. 5 & 12 • 1 wk.
$1799
+Taxes & other fees (including service charges): $303

Cancun / Riviera Maya
Moon Palace Golf & Spa Resort • 4 1/2★
All-Inclusive • Deluxe rm.
Feb. 6 • 1 wk.
$1869
+Taxes & other fees (including service charges): $275

Moon Palace Casino,Golf & Spa Resort

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